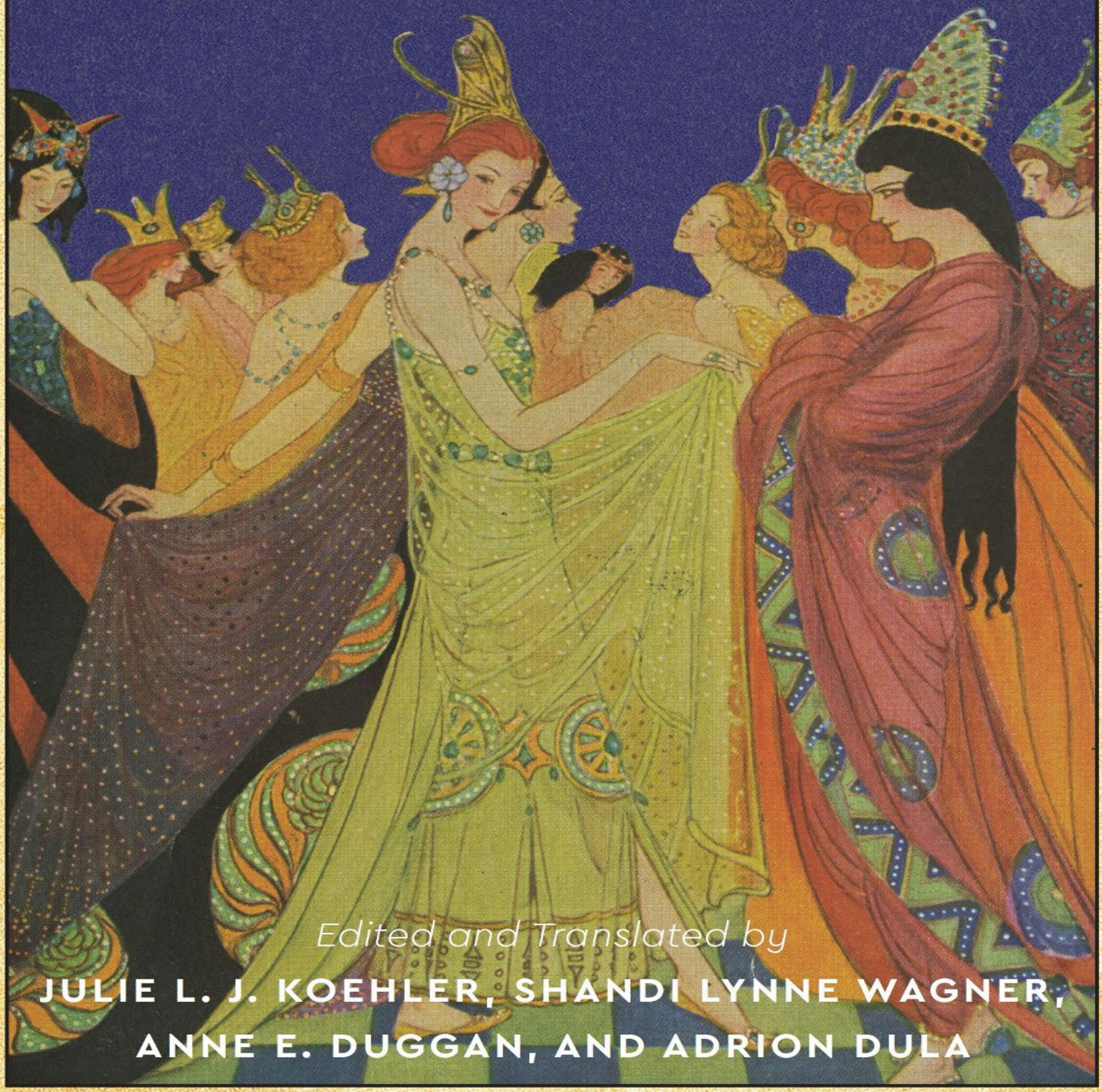
Women Writing Wonder

An Anthology of Subversive Nineteenth-Century British, French, and German Fairy Tales



Edited and Translated by

JULIE L. J. KOEHLER, SHANDI LYNNE WAGNER, ANNE E. DUGGAN, AND ADRION DULA

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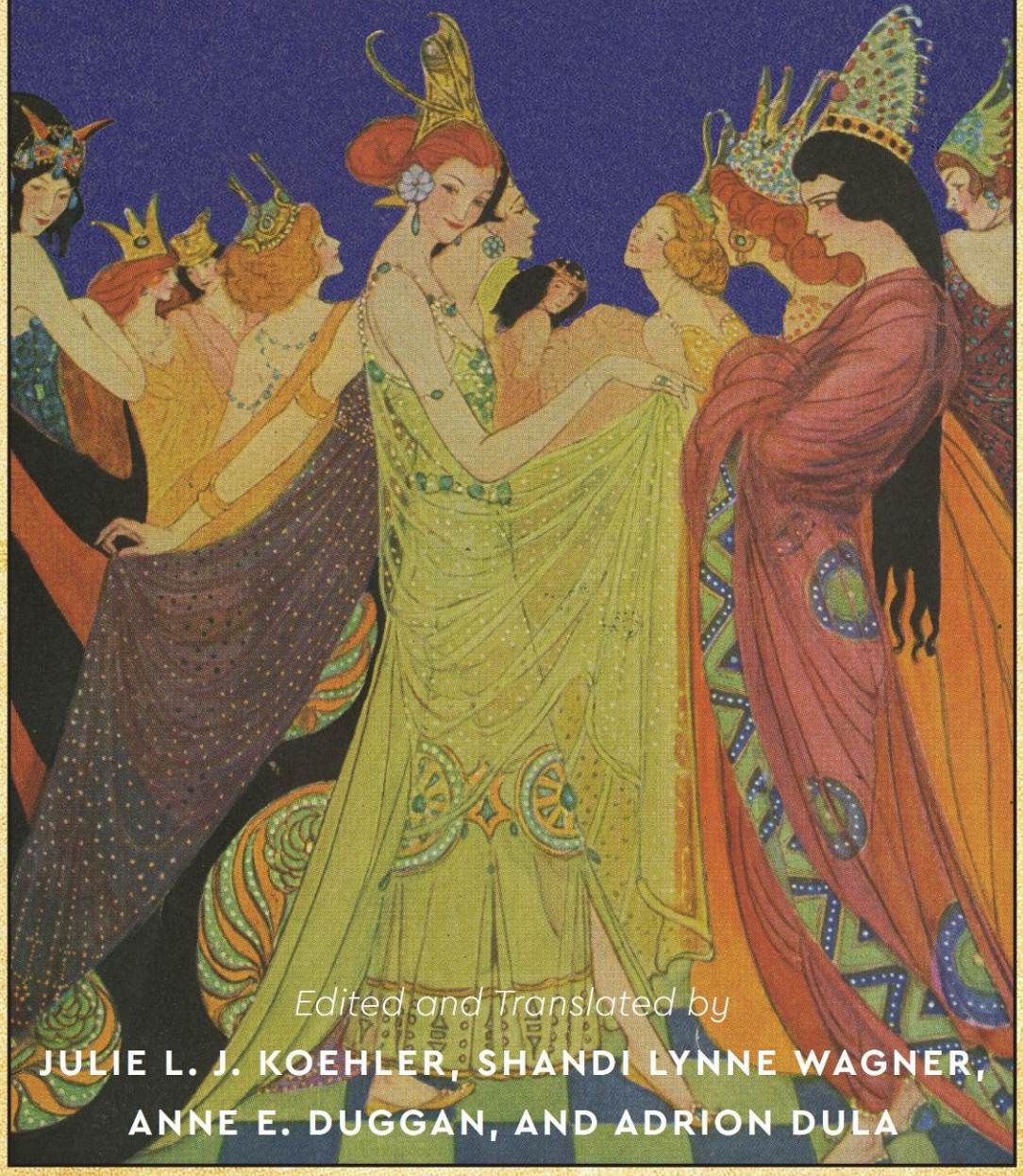

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Women Writing Wonder

Series in Fairy-Tale Studies

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Edited and Translated by

Julie L. J. Koehler, Shandi Lynne Wagner, Anne E. Duggan, and Adrion Dula

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Introduction

Anne E. Duggan, Adrion Dula, Julie L. J. Koehler, and Shandi Lynne Wagner

There are many misconceptions about the fairy-tale genre today. Many people think of passive princesses à la Disney, Charles Perrault, and select tales by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen, which have come to form the classical fairy-tale canon of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.[1] This canon includes such tales as “Beauty and the Beast,” “Cinderella,” “Hansel and Gretel,” “The Little Mermaid,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Puss-in-Boots,” “Sleeping Beauty,” “Rapunzel,” and “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.” With the exception of “Beauty and the Beast,” the canonical version of which was penned by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, the canon contains tales predominantly shaped by men, whether they are male-authored tales or tales that have a female source but were edited by men. These “classical” tales are taken to be representative of the fairy tale in general throughout the history of the genre in western Europe and the United States and Canada. Indeed, twentieth- and twenty-first-century authors and directors like Angela Carter, Margaret Atwood, Emma Donoghue, Amélie Nothomb, and Catherine Breillat—to name a few—base their revisionist fairy tales on this classical canon, often subverting the representations of gender and sexuality in a genre deemed inherently patriarchal and supposedly filled with passive heroines.

This conception of the genre lacks historical grounding and does not take into account the important role women writers have always played in the establishment of the fairy tale as a literary genre in western Europe. Since the 1980s, scholars such as Anne E. Duggan, Patricia Hannon, Elizabeth Wanning Harries, Lewis Seifert, and Jack Zipes have foregrounded the importance of the women fairy-tale writers of the 1690s in France, known as the *conteuses*, in the development of the genre. Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy, Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier, Henriette-Julie de Murat, and Catherine Bernard—among other women writers—penned tales that enjoyed as much

popularity as those by Perrault, and they influenced eighteenth-century fairy-tale writers like Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve and Leprince de Beaumont. Indeed, d'Aulnoy's tales remained part of the European fairy-tale canon well into the nineteenth century, influencing British, French, and German-language writers of tales. For instance, d'Aulnoy's tales were widely adapted to the nineteenth-century British stage, as the work of Jennifer Schacker has aptly demonstrated.[2]

While increasing attention has been paid to the 1690s French *conteuses* and the revisionist writers, such as Carter, Atwood, and Donoghue, women writing fairy tales in nineteenth-century Britain, France, and German states have not received the attention they deserve. Being attentive to writers like Félicité de Genlis, Bettina von Arnim, or Letitia Elizabeth Landon foregrounds a certain continuity and even a genealogy of women writing wonder, making us question conceptions of the fairy-tale canon as something stable or universal and leading us to rethink the ways in which gender and sexuality have been represented through the genre. Scholars have recognized the various models of female agency available in tales by the *conteuses*, the ways in which these women writers often—but not always—challenged patriarchal and unjust social and political structures. However, such questioning didn't simply end in the eighteenth century. Many women writers in France, the German states, and Britain took up the magic wand and continued producing tales that gave women a voice, and female characters agency, and that were also widely read by the general public.

Subverting Tradition

Fairy-tale scholars too often take as their point of departure, as noted above, what has become "our" twentieth- and twenty-first century notion of the genre, heavily influenced by the hegemony of Disney Studios, which significantly impacted the American and more generally Western canon of fairy tales. Subverting tales about passive heroines that have unfortunately become emblematic of the genre is not necessarily the subversion we are primarily concerned with here, but at times it can be. In fact, the tales we selected often subvert our twentieth- and twenty-first century expectations

of the genre and its supposed preponderance of female passivity. Together, these tales do so by pointing out the complexity of the literary field in the nineteenth century, a field that can only be incomplete when so many women authors of fairy tales are ignored despite their popularity in the period. “Subverting tradition” can furthermore mean finding legacies that go beyond or undermine the unquestioned “tradition” or legacy of Perrault-Grimms-Andersen. Our corpus points, significantly, to the extensive legacy of d’Aulnoy found in the works of nineteenth-century women writers of fairy tales. Our writers thus draw from earlier tales by women authors that question everything from women’s rights to the norms of the genre. They also often challenge fairy tales penned or edited by male writers in ways that undermine the gender norms propagated through them. Finally, the “tradition” these writers “subvert” can also refer to a more general questioning of gender norms that restrict female agency prevalent in nineteenth-century British, French, and German society, as well as the problematizing of class and even race issues in postrevolutionary Europe.

This doesn’t mean to suggest, however, that our writers don’t sometimes deploy racial and class stereotypes in their tales or that they are all revolutionary in every respect. Sometimes writers from our corpus challenge gender norms but uphold class and race prejudices, or their challenge to them does not go far enough. Félicité de Choiseul-Meuse, for instance, questions the accepted superiority of the prince and has her heroine win the hand of an artisan, the “true” prince of the tale, anticipating trends we see much later in films such as *The Princess Bride* (1987), in which the princess chooses the farm boy turned pirate over the prince. But Choiseul-Meuse also adheres to racist notions of Blackness as it relates to beauty, even if she questions the right of a White person to mistreat someone because they are Black. Similarly, Elisabeth Ebeling’s “Black and White” depicts a Black prince as a handsome, smart, and worthy husband, and she ends her tale with a moral that is progressive for the period: “It does not matter if you look White or Black; it only matters if you are wise.” However, at the end of the tale the races still end up segregated into separate nation-states, and the color-blind moral seems to ignore the experience of the Black prince, who cannot succeed in wooing a White princess simply due to his race, even though he far outpaces the competition in beauty, strength, and wit. Some of the British tales, like the one included here by Mary Shelley, feature a resourceful heroine but do not question the

socially prescribed destiny of marriage for such a heroine. Overall, we found few examples of queer tales; however, authors such as Julie Delafaye-Bréhier and George Sand provide examples of tales with homosocial happy endings, and like Sand, several of our authors, including George Egerton, explicitly reject the marriage plot.

In order to provide a framework to better understand what is at stake when women write wonder and subvert tradition, it is important to consider their engagement with the history of the fairy tale as well as the social, historical, and political contexts in which they wrote. Some of the women included here, such as Delafaye-Bréhier, Karoline Stahl, and Christina Rossetti, are considered writers for children, yet they tackle issues relevant to the changes taking place in nineteenth-century Europe.[3] Three of the writers included here—Mary de Morgan and George Egerton in Great Britain and the German Hedwig Dohm—were directly involved in movements to empower women. As we will see, their predecessors used the fairy-tale genre as early as the 1690s to tackle similar questions regarding women's social and political status. Indeed, including the history of nineteenth-century women writing wonder provides what could be considered the "missing link" between the *conteuses* of the early modern period and feminist revisionist writers like Carter and Atwood, among many others, of the twentieth- and twenty-first century.

Fairy Tales before the Nineteenth Century

The history of the fairy tale before the nineteenth century reveals much more complex underpinnings of the genre than what one might initially think, particularly with respect to the role of women writers, the question of audience, and the representation of gender. Importantly, the majority of French literary fairy tales from the early modern period were written by aristocratic salon women. As Hannon has shown, the rise of the literary fairy tale in France at the end of the seventeenth century was centered in the aristocratic salons and popularized by seventeenth-century women writers: "Although literary historians and critics alike have canonized only Perrault's tales, it is now widely recognized that seventeenth-century fairy-tale writing was concentrated in the salon milieu and monopolized by

aristocratic women and their elite associates, who authored two-thirds, or 74 of the 114 narratives published between 1690 and 1715" (11). In fact, the very first literary fairy tale of this first vogue in France was not written by Perrault, as is often assumed, but rather by d'Aulnoy, who embedded the tale "L'île de la félicité" ("The Island of Happiness") into her 1690 "best-selling novel *Histoire d'Hypolite, Comte de Duglas*" (Hannon 12). In addition, it is from d'Aulnoy that the designation "fairy tale" came into being, from the French "conte de fées" used in the titles of d'Aulnoy's multivolume collections *Les contes des fées* (Fairy tales; 4 vols., 1697–98) and *Contes nouveaux; ou Les fées à la mode* (New tales; or Fairies in fashion; 4 vols., 1698), initially appearing in England as *Tales of the Fairies* (1699).

It is often assumed that fairy tales have always been written expressly for children. In fact, the primary audience of the French literary fairy tales written by salon women were educated and aristocratic adult women and men.[4] As Seifert has eloquently explained, the belief that children are or always have been the primary audience of these stories may be an inversion of subject matter to audience, given that fairy tales often are a shorter version of a *Bildungsroman*: "More significant, their classification as children's literature is at least in part by a mimetic transposition of content onto intended readership since they depict, by and large, the conflicts of childhood or adolescence and its resolution into adulthood" (1–2). This is not to say that children were not exposed to fairy tales before the eighteenth century, the period in which we see the emergence of children's literature.[5] It is only with the publication of John Newbery's *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* (1744), Sarah Fielding's *The Governess: or Little Female Academy* (1749), and Leprince de Beaumont's *Le magasin des enfants* (*The Young Misses Magazine*, 1757), in which appeared her version of "Beauty and the Beast," that we see the emergence of children's literature. By the 1790s in England, d'Aulnoy's aristocratic tales were being rebranded and marketed for children through additions to titles such as *Selected for the Entertainment of Young People* or *For the Amusement of All Those Little Masters and Misses Who, by Duty to Their Parents, and Obedience to Their Superiors, Aim at Becoming Great Lords and Ladies* (Grenby 10).

As many fairy-tale scholars, from Zipes and Seifert to Ruth Bottigheimer and Charlotte Trinquet du Lys have thoroughly documented, French writers

were heavily influenced by the literary collections of two Italian writers, Giovanni Francesco Straparola, who penned *Le piacevoli notti* (*The Pleasant Nights*, 1551–53), and Giambattista Basile, who wrote *Lo cunto de li cunti overo lo trattenemiento de peccerille* (*The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones*, 1634–36), also known as *Il pentamerone*. Despite the belief that Perrault's works in particular came from oral "folk" sources such as peasants and wet nurses, there is ample evidence to show that Perrault and the *conteuses* (as well as the Brothers Grimm) drew many of their narratives from their literary predecessors: "[A]t least six of Madame d'Aulnoy's fairy tales can be traced to Straparola's *fiabe* . . . almost all of Perrault's tales have models in the collections of Straparola and Basile" (Zipes, *Great Fairy-Tale Tradition* 857). Trinquet du Lys's 2012 *Les contes de fées français (1690–1700)* (French Fairy Tales [1690–1700]) investigates this very subject, proposing that the influence of the Italian authors is much greater than scholars have previously acknowledged.

Divided into thirteen nights, Straparola's text includes fairy tales along with songs and riddles or enigmas, all of which are enclosed within a frame tale modeled on Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (1353). Frame tales were a popular device used by authors to connect their written tales to oral settings and to readers' social contexts: "Authors often built an audience into the frametale, an audience that could be understood as a fictively shared social context for its readers. If the same tales were told aloud, they would be listened to within a group, that is, within an actually shared social context that incorporated everything appropriate to that situation: food, wine, jolly spirits, and joshing wordplay much like that depicted within Straparola's frametale" (Bottigheimer, *Magic* 5). Straparola's frame tale includes a group of "named and identifiable men and women together with a group of (superficially identified but historically unidentifiable) young women on the island of Murano near Venice" (Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales* 7). Notably, all the fairy tales are narrated by the female characters while men relate only a few of the texts. Bottigheimer argues that the audience for Straparola's tales influenced his choice of primarily female narrators and the selection of stories: "The existence of a socially diverse and gender-mixed reading public probably played a role in Straparola's choice of stories and the design of his books' frametale" (*Fairy Godfather* 86).

This imbalance, in favor of female fairy-tale storytellers, not only reflects earlier practices but it also foreshadows later trends in fairy-tale writing. In early modern France, women writers at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century dominated the publications of literary fairy-tale collections. The Grimms, too, would rely almost exclusively on female sources—both oral and literary—for their collection at the beginning of the nineteenth century, some of whom were authors themselves in the period.[6] Many of the French women, including d'Aulnoy and Leprince de Beaumont, also embedded their fairy tales into novellas or used frame tales to introduce their fairy tales and, often although not exclusively, used female narrators. It is important to note that the embedded audience in Straparola's frame narrative is that of adult women and men and not young children. Likewise, the Grimms' intended audience was at first an adult academic one, and only later did they adapt their tales for a child audience. As with the later *conteurs* and *conteuses* in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France as well as women writers of wonder in the nineteenth century, the use of the marginal genre of the fairy tale allowed for the treatment of topics that may have been too risky to examine in other more socially prominent literary genres.

As we can see from this brief background history, the western European fairy tale emerged from aristocratic courtly and salon culture, with women playing important roles as tale writers, as real or fictional tale tellers, and as readers. Moreover, while the fairy tale was influenced by oral folk culture, it was very much a literary genre that in fact could tackle a range of pressing issues. Although the early modern fairy tale was far from being designed exclusively for children, by the nineteenth century it could address an explicitly younger audience, at the same time that it remained a relevant genre for adults through which authors could explore questions related to gender and class, as well as the limits of the real and the imaginary.

Feminism and Fairy Tales

For decades, feminist scholars have investigated the ways women have revised and rewritten classical fairy tales. In particular, in Britain and anglophone North America, feminist fairy-tale research has focused on

postmodern authors such as Angela Carter, Emma Donoghue, Anne Sexton, and more recently, Helen Oyeyemi.[7] Within the domain of French fairy tales, scholarship has centered on the 1690s *conteuses*; and with the exception of the incredible work of Jeannine Blackwell and Shawn Jarvis, feminist scholars examining the German tradition have largely concentrated on the treatment of female characters in the Grimms.[8] Of course, these studies are essential in critiquing the tales that Disney made classic and that circulate widely today. However, these general trends in feminist and gender scholarship have all but ignored women writing wonder in the nineteenth century. Yet, as Jack Zipes explains in his introduction to *Don't Bet on the Prince* (1987), "[T]here were feminist precedents set in the literary fairy-tale tradition by the end of the nineteenth century" (13). He cites Mary de Morgan, Mary Louisa Molesworth, and Evelyn Sharp as less widely known Victorian authors who "conceived tales with strong heroines who rebel against convention-ridden societies" (13). Despite attempts by scholars like Nina Auerbach and U. C. Knoepflmacher (1992), who have foregrounded the important role women writers played before the twentieth century, the impact of these Victorian precursors, and their French- and German-language contemporaries, have too often gone unnoticed.

In *Twice upon a Time* (2001), Elizabeth Wanning Harries insightfully connects the fairy tales of the French *conteuses* to those of more contemporary feminist fairy-tale authors without looking at the protofeminist fairy tales of nineteenth-century women. Although Harries does briefly acknowledge that "less well known tales, many of them by women, were much more complex and layered narratives" like those of the *conteuses*, for her, the British fairy-tale tradition, for instance, is one of translation and editing rather than of subversion and revision (99). But there is more to women's fairy-tale tradition in the nineteenth-century than Harries perceives.

Shuli Barzilai, for one, importantly foregrounds the legacy of the *conteuses* in regard to the nineteenth-century writer Anne Thackeray Ritchie, explaining that "in rewriting fairy-tale plots for the entertainment of adult readers, Ritchie may be said to carry on the tradition inaugurated by Madame d'Aulnoy and other French women writers who transformed existing Italian, Oriental, and oral tales into literary fairy tales that . . . engage[d] [with] the social and political issues of [their] day" (83–84). In

fact, just as d'Aulnoy, Perrault, and the other *conteuses* adapted, rewrote, and transformed tales by Straparola and Basile, so the British, French, and German authors featured in this anthology drew from the early modern French tradition. This suggests that the episode of fairy-tale revision to be examined here is a direct descendent of the well-known and well-studied French tradition and a missing link between the subversive tales of the French *conteuses* and the more recent feminist fairy-tale tradition.

While the fairy tale can uphold dominant ideologies, such as those surrounding gender and marriage, it also easily lends itself to subversive social critique. As Harries explains, "Feminists, of course, have been criticizing the Grimms' patriarchal assumptions and nineteenth-century bourgeois attitudes for nearly three decades. . . . As the second wave of feminist thinking got under way in the 1970s, many critics fixed on fairy tales as condensed expressions of social expectations for women and as dangerous myths that determined their lives and hopes" (13). Indeed, classic fairy tales like "Cinderella" and "Sleeping Beauty" certainly reinforce feminine ideals of beauty and passivity as well as the idea that women will live "happily ever after" once wed. Circulating alongside these fairy tales, however, were many others penned by women that undermined patriarchal ideology, problematizing gender expectations and other restrictions placed on women. These tales and those from the Grimms with more active heroines are unfamiliar today, not because they were unpopular at the time of their publication, but in large part because Disney and others in the twentieth century created a new canon of tales with predominantly passive heroines. Still, this feminist fairy-tale tradition created and continued by women authors foregrounds the subversive potential of the genre.

As Marina Warner points out, the very structure of the genre lends itself to social criticism, as the "enchantments" in fairy tales "encipher concerns, beliefs and desires in brilliant, seductive images that are themselves a form of camouflage, making it possible to utter harsh truths, to say what you dare" (xxi). This is so for many reasons, including but not limited to the fantastic nature of the narratives, the marginality of the genre, and its later association with the feminine realm of child-rearing. For the French *conteuses*, Seifert explains "that the vogue of fairy tales enabled the *conteuses* to assert and demonstrate their own vision of women's roles in literary culture and society at large" (9) at a time "when their role in the

cultural sphere was a hotly debated issue" (8). Seifert continues his analysis by pointing out how the genre was ideal for women to assert their subversive viewpoints because it was nonthreatening: "The fairy-tale form was particularly well suited to this task because of its ambivalent marginality. It was at once an unthreatening genre that was far from approaching the elite status of tragedy or epic poetry and a *mondain* form that signified the sociable ideal of aristocratic culture. It was at once a genre that women could appropriate without threatening male literary figures and a form that enabled them to defend and perpetuate their own *locus* of cultural authority" (9).

While the French *conteuses* used the form to defend their position in French society under "increasing pressure . . . to retreat from the public sphere" (9), Seifert also notes the genre's more recent utilization by feminist fairy-tale authors: "A number of authors (including Angela Carter and Anne Sexton) have either rewritten or invented tales so as to empower heroines, attenuate male aggression, and/or problematize the traditional marriage closure" (4). Similarly, nineteenth-century British, French, and German women authors used the fairy tale to critique social expectations of women, thereby influencing their audiences to enact social reforms liberating women from the chains of domesticity and ideal femininity, or to at least change public opinion regarding the advisability and plausibility of preserving such ideals. They did so by employing a variety of techniques, from heroines who depart from the accepted feminine ideal to an emphasis on female disillusionment with marriage following the wedding, and in this way they continued the tradition of the seventeenth-century French *conteuses* and foreshadowed the work of twentieth- and twenty-first century feminist fairy-tale authors.

Europe in the Nineteenth Century

To understand how nineteenth-century women authors used the genre of the fairy tale to address these different issues, it is important to get a sense of the historical context in which they were writing. One of the fundamental events that shook all of Europe was the French Revolution, considered to have been officially launched with the storming of the Bastille in 1789,

concluding with the coup d'état of Napoléon Bonaparte in 1799. In unprecedented ways, it challenged rigid notions of class and hierarchy that prevailed in Europe, grounded in the political structure of monarchy. The French Revolution paved the way toward the possibility of a government ruled not by a king but by the people through democratic institutions, and it opened up the possibility of recognizing not only the rights of men but also those of women and of people of all social classes. However, the road was a rocky one, particularly in France.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, the people of France experienced three republics, two empires, and two monarchies (the Bourbon Restoration and the July Monarchy). Napoléon marks the transition from the revolutionary First Republic to the First Empire, when he was declared emperor in 1804. Figures like Félicité de Genlis, who had to flee Paris during the period of the revolution, were allowed to return to France under Napoléon, who sought to reconcile the former nobility with the new, ostensibly more republican regime he was establishing. This regime lasted until 1814–15, with the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy by Louis XVIII, brother of Louis XVI, who was then succeeded by his brother Charles X. Charles was forced to abdicate during the July Revolution of 1830, when Louis-Philippe d'Orléans, known as the bourgeois-king and to whom Genlis had served as governor, ascended to the throne.[9] This was followed by the 1848 revolution, leading to the Second Republic, which eventually devolved into the Second Empire, when the president of the Republic, Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, staged a coup d'état in 1851, to name himself Emperor Napoléon III a year later. Nearly twenty years later the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71) destabilized Bonaparte's regime and led to the foundation of the Third Republic, which itself came under attack in 1871 when Parisian radicals, inspired by the principles of the French Revolution, took over Paris, declaring it an autonomous commune. The Paris Commune was defeated, and *communards* like Louise Michel were killed, imprisoned, or exiled. Prerevolutionary notions of "noble" and "commoner" were weakened, even as such distinctions persisted. As David Higgs argues, "Having realized that they could no longer aspire to be a ruling caste, nobles sought to permeate the new ruling body with their old ideas" (xiii).

Whereas nineteenth-century France was a nation in the midst of social and political upheaval, Germany was a nation in the making. In this period,

German-speaking kingdoms and principalities were held together under the umbrella of the Hapsburg-ruled Holy Roman Empire, until its dissolution in 1806, precipitated by Napoléon's defeat of the Hapsburgs at Austerlitz. The period can be characterized by tensions between republican and royalist positions, with figures like King Ernest Augustus of Hanover reaffirming monarchical rule, demanding in 1837 an oath of allegiance from all officeholders, including university professors. Employed at the University of Göttingen in Hanover, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were among the Göttingen Seven, a group of professors who refused to give the oath. They were relieved of their positions and went into exile. Their good friend, Bettina von Arnim, interceded on their behalf with King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia and secured positions for them at the University of Berlin. The collection and editing project of the Brothers Grimm cannot be separated from their objective to unify the disparate German territories into one republican nation. Through their work on German tales, legends, and the great German dictionary, they sought to demonstrate the connections between these varied smaller states and demonstrate a shared German culture. Consolidation eventually happened by 1871 under Prussian rule after the defeat of Austria, France, and Denmark.

In a more politically stable situation than that found in either France or Germany, Great Britain's constitutional monarchy remained strong throughout the century, and following her coronation in 1837, Queen Victoria ushered in the Victorian period and would rule for the next sixty years. During this time, Britain was at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution, which led to mass migration from rural to urban centers for factory jobs throughout Europe. With more concentrated urban centers, pollution, sanitation, and child labor became increasingly urgent concerns, at the same time that this socioeconomic shift paved the way toward the rise of a strong middle class. Although the opportunity for upward mobility allowed the country to avoid the type of revolution experienced in France, conflict between the classes, in particular the governing nobility and the rising middle class, was still notable and is addressed in the tales of Shelley, de Morgan, and Gaskell. Despite the loss of the American colonies at the end of the eighteenth century, Britain was one of the most powerful empires globally. Its thriving economy was supported by its colonial presence in coastal India, South Africa, and Australia earlier in the century, and, increasing its territory over the course of the century, by the end of the

nineteenth century Britain controlled Canada, large areas of East Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and parts of Southeast Asia. Yet Britain did not escape the century without its own share of rebellions (class, Irish, and colonial) and wars, such as the Crimean and Second Boer Wars.

Important shifts were occurring in France, the territories that would become Germany, and Great Britain over the course of the century, including the challenges to inherited notions of social class and monarchy. More republican structures of political organization were being implemented and bourgeois sociocultural mores were taking precedence over earlier, aristocratic ones. The Industrial Revolution was changing the shape of European cities, creating a new, proletarian working class, while the Age of Imperialism impacted Europeans' perception of the non-European Other. Women responded to and engaged in these changes in various ways.

Women in the Nineteenth Century

Women throughout western Europe benefited from several general cultural shifts. The nineteenth century saw rising literacy rates throughout the population due to the expansion of state-sponsored educational institutions. While technological improvement in printing reduced prices to make the printed word more accessible to a broad range of social classes, political changes also led to a broader diffusion of ideas across Europe. The year 1848 was important for the women's and workers' movements alike. In France, the revolutionary upheavals of 1848 to 1851 brought about the "lifting of all restrictions on the press and assembly," resulting in the establishment of feminist and feminist-leaning journals such as the *Voix des femmes* (Voice of women), among others (Moses 128). Such journals subsequently led to the formation of political clubs. The *Voix des femmes*, for instance, was at the foundation of the Société de la Voix des femmes (Society of the Voice of Women).[10] In the German states, women's rights were also a large part of the movements in 1848, and writers like Louise Otto-Peters and Bettina von Arnim fought for the rights of women—especially poor woman—but unfortunately these movements were not successful in the long run. However, this did not stop German women

writers like Hedwig Dohm from engaging in the struggle for women's suffrage, women's education, and more legal protections.

Whereas prerevolutionary aristocratic society valued at least elite women's public roles as salon women who could engage in intellectual and artistic pursuits, with the rise of the bourgeoisie in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the model of women being restricted to the domestic sphere was increasingly the rule for all women. In England, this took the shape of the "Angel of the Household." This concept expressed the feminine ideal that women should be virtuous, chaste, maternal, self-sacrificing, and submissive and obedient to their husbands, who maintained economic control over the household. However, British women worked over the course of the century to gain more rights with respect to divorce and child custody as well as property. While by no means cohesive, the New Woman movement that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century sought to expand women's roles in society, seeking to emancipate them from sociocultural and legal restrictions related to female education, employment, and women's suffrage. Egerton was a member of the movement, whose stories communicate, among other important issues, the belief that "because women's ignorance about matters of sexuality could have devastating consequences, women should be educated about sexual issues before marriage so they could make intelligent choices about the men they married" (Nelson xi).

Transnationally, women were engaged in struggles to have better access to education, to obtain legal rights, including the right to vote, and to more generally have an equal legal and social status to men, which also meant the right to employment and property so as not to be dependent on men and thus obligated to marry. In earlier periods, aristocratic women like the 1690s fairy-tale writers did problematize and engage in philosophical debates about women's rights, and they often fought for the equality of women and men. But in the nineteenth century, with a much wider access to education and print materials, and in a postrevolutionary society that scrutinized the superiority of the aristocracy, such questions could be asked by women issuing from a broader range of social classes at the same time that even elite women became cognizant of issues affecting both women and men of the lower classes. Directly and indirectly, many of the women writers included here took advantage of their access to different kinds of print venues, including literary annuals, tale collections, and children's

books, to explore many of these questions that preoccupied women in the nineteenth century.

Women Writing Wonder in the Nineteenth Century

With the exception of Shawn Jarvis and Jeannine Blackwell's *The Queen's Mirror* (2001) and Nina Auerbach and U. C. Knoepflmacher's *Forbidden Journeys* (1992), no critical works or anthologies have brought together fairy tales by nineteenth-century women writers, and none take a transnational perspective. Our transnational approach draws from the work of Julie Campbell and Anne Larsen, and Anke Gilleir, Alicia Montoya, and Suzanna van Dijk, who have examined "transnational textual communit[ies] of women writers" in the early modern period, which often also coexisted with networks of direct contact (Campbell and Larsen 2). In our research we realized that nineteenth-century British, French, and German women fairy-tale writers were directly and indirectly inspired by the 1690 *conteuses* and their treatment of female agency, and they also took cues from one another across borders to construct protofeminist tales that anticipate the later adaptations of classical tales by postmodern writers. By bringing nineteenth-century women fairy-tale writers together in this anthology, then, we are able to fill in the gaps between the early modern *conteuses* and the postmodern feminist revisionists to foreground a transnational and even transhistorical community of women fairy-tale writers.

This anthology features tales that (1) depict relationships that cross class and racial divides, thus challenging normative marriage practices; (2) critically examine traditional fairy-tale tropes, such as "happily ever after" and the need for a woman to marry; (3) challenge the perception that fairy-tale collecting, editing, and creation was male work, associated particularly with the Grimms; and (4) demonstrate the role of women in the development of the emerging field of children's literature and moral tales. Many of our tales represent an in-between form that is not fully children's literature and that addresses mature subjects relevant to the lives of nineteenth-century women. Even in tales targeting children, these women

writers question the limits of female agency as it relates to education and marriage, among other issues, and they question the genre of the fairy tale itself, playing with notions of class, gender, sexuality, and conventional fairy-tale narrative to compose their protofeminist tales. We understand *protofeminist* to refer to texts that represent women as rational subjects endowed with equal rights under the law, in marriage, and in society at large. This includes the right to engage in the public sphere, which can take the form of publicly (even if discreetly) expressing one's opinion in print. Table 1 foregrounds some of the themes that connect our authors.

British, French, and German women were not only producing popular fairy tales within their own national traditions, but they were also engaged in conversations with other national traditions. For instance, a number of the German authors, such as Benedikte Naubert and Caroline de la Motte Fouqué, were regularly translated for British readers in the nineteenth century, and Mary Shelley, for instance, was familiar with Naubert's work. Tale collections by Choiseul-Meuse and Julie Delafaye-Bréhier were translated into English by Charlotte Herdman and published in Dublin by John Cumming. A correspondence between two political heavyweights, Bettina von Arnim in Prussia and George Sand in France, led to the production of identical texts. One was found in German in Arnim's daughter Gisela's archive, and another was published in Sand's name in the 1870s. This volume hopes to contribute to investigations into the origin of this tale claimed by both Germany and France, and the relationship among these writers and their stories across Europe in general.

Hilary Brown has pointed to connections between German and British women writers, noting that "[l]ater in the nineteenth century, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote a poem 'To Bettine, The Child-Friend of Goethe' (1838)," a reference to Bettina von Arnim (15). German male authors like Johann Gottfried Herder and Ludwig Tieck were influenced by British gains in folklore, notably James Macpherson's Ossian and Thomas Percy's collection of ballads, as well as by Gothic writers like Ann Radcliffe and Horace Walpole. However, German women had little access to English texts because "French took precedence in the average education of a well-to-do female" in the German-speaking states (12).[11] Nevertheless, "there are indications that women did play a part in cross-cultural interchange [between Britain and the German states]: by working as translators, by having their own work translated abroad, or by reading and assimilating

foreign texts" (13). All in all, this historical evidence of networks of texts and writers foregrounds the existence of a transnational tradition of women fairy-tale writers in the nineteenth century that connected British, French, and German authors and texts.

Table 1. Themes

Theme	**Author**	**Tale**	**Year**
Race	Choiseul-Meuse	"Rose and Black"	1818
	Ebeling	"Black and White"	1869
Class	Genlis	"Pamrose, or The Palace and the Cottage"	1801
	Tieck Bernhardi	"The Deer"	1801
	Choiseul-Meuse	"Rose and Black"	1818
	Stahl	"Princess Elmina"	1818/1821
	Shelley	"The Invisible Girl"	1833
	Gaskell	"Curious, if True"	1860

Theme	Author	Tale	Year
	de Morgan	“The Seeds of Love”	1877
Pedagogical tales for children	Delafaye-Bréhier	“The Story of Little Clotilde”	1817
	Stahl	“Princess Elmina”	1818/1821
	Gisela von Arnim	“Of Rabbits”	1850s
	Ebeling	“Black and White”	1869
	Sand	“The Rose Cloud”	1872
Local folklores	Frau Lehnhardt and Bettina von Arnim	“Beardless Hans”	1808
	Wild Grimm	“The Three Little Men in the Wood”	1812
	Shelley	“The Invisible Girl”	1833

Theme	Author	Tale	Year
	Michel	“The Ogress, Beatrix de Mauléon”	1872
Female self-sufficiency and rejection of marriage plot	Landon	“The Sleeping Beauty”	1837
	Rossetti	“The Prince’s Progress”	1866
	Sand	“The Rose Cloud”	1872
	de Morgan	“The Seeds of Love”	1877
	Egerton	“Virgin Soil”	1894
	Dohm	“Lotte the Grump”	1899
Romantic tales	Tieck Bernhardi	“The Deer”	1801
	Fouqué	“The Tears”	1806
	Shelley	“The Invisible Girl”	1833

Theme	Author	Tale	Year
	Sand	“The Rose Cloud”	1872
Metanarrative tales	Schopenhauer	“The Forest Fairy Tale”	1844
	Gaskell	“Curious, if True”	1860
	Sand	“The Rose Cloud”	1872

In addition to these texts issuing from varied national traditions, the fairy tales selected for this anthology also provide an overview of the evolution of women writing wonder in the nineteenth century. Earlier in the century, fairy tales from each of these traditions present continuities with eighteenth-century tale aesthetics at the same time that they point to more “modern” (as opposed to “early modern”) forms of the tale. Stéphanie Félicité de Genlis, for instance, contributed to the growing body of what was emerging as children’s literature in the 1780s, but the tale included in this anthology is marked by postrevolutionary notions about social class. Several of these texts are further distinguished by a protofeminist perspective, addressing issues affecting women, such as marriage practices and the lack of economic and political autonomy, and highlighting female strengths and women’s roles within nineteenth-century society, evident in works by such writers as Letitia Elizabeth Landon, George Egerton, Hedwig Dohm, and George Sand. Some tales are also characterized by metacommentary on the fairy-tale genre and the influence of authorial political affiliations, particularly evident in the works by Adele Schopenhauer and Elizabeth Gaskell. Because writers in the British and French traditions tended to pen longer works, we included fewer tales by them than from the German tradition, which is characterized by a more

succinct style; we hope to have balanced space devoted to each tradition with coverage.[12]

This corpus of tales also foregrounds the fact that women writers *always* questioned narratives that limited female characters' agency. After Perrault published "Cinderella" and "Little Thumbling"—the first narrative about a passive heroine and the second about an active hero—d'Aulnoy penned "Finette-Cendron," which blends Perrault's two tales to create a new story that features a plucky heroine with the wit of Little Thumbling (Finette) and representing a more active incarnation of Cinderella (Cendron). The authors included here similarly reshape familiar narratives in ways that challenge gender norms. Table 2 provides a sense of the different tales these writers revised and transformed.

By bringing these tales together, we hope both to foreground women writers' very important contributions to the genre of the fairy tale historically and, in so doing, to challenge, even subvert, common assumptions about what a fairy tale is, particularly as it relates to women and gender. This "missing link" between the early modern and postmodern women writers of fairy tales indeed foregrounds the ways in which women have continually and consistently worked to reshape fundamental narratives, communicating both historically and transnationally with one another to validate women as active cultural agents of change and as authors.

Table 2. General Types of Tales

Type of Tale	**Author**	**Tale**	**Year**
Cinderella	Genlis	"Pamrose, or The Palace and the Cottage"	1801
	Choiseul-Meuse	"Rose and Black"	1818

Type of Tale	**Author**	**Tale**	**Year**
	Shelley	“The Invisible Girl”	1833
	Gaskell	“Curious, if True”	1860
Sleeping Beauty	Landon	“The Sleeping Beauty”	1837
	Gaskell	“Curious, if True”	1860
	Rossetti	“The Prince’s Progress”	1866
	Michel	“The Ogress, Beatrix de Mauléon”	1872
Kind and Unkind Girl tales	Wild Grimm	“Three Little Men in the Wood”	1812
	Delafaye-Bréhier	“The Story of Little Clotilde”	1817
False groom or bride	Genlis	“Pamrose, or The Palace and the Cottage”	1801
	Choiseul-Meuse	“Rose and Black”	1818
	Stahl	“Princess Elmina”	1818/1821

Type of Tale	Author	Tale	Year
Animal bride/bridegroom	Anonymous	“Princess Geldena of Water City”	1801
	Gisela von Arnim	“Of Rabbits”	1850s
Abandoned children	Delafaye-Bréhier	“The Story of Little Clotilde”	1817
Little Red Riding Hood	Gaskell	“Curious, if True”	1860
	Egerton	“Virgin Soil”	1894
Ghost stories	Frau Lehnhardt and Bettina von Arnim	“Beardless Hans”	1808
	Gaskell	“Curious, if True”	1860

1 Walt Disney productions significantly adapted tales by the Grimms that centered on passive heroines, although the brothers’ corpus provides many examples of plucky heroines; Disney’s *Cinderella* (1950) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) were based on Perrault, whose works include mostly passive heroines. The Grimms’ version of “Cinderella,” for instance, gives more agency to female characters than Perrault’s does.

2 See Schacker’s important book, *Staging Fairyland* (2018), in which the impact of d’Aulnoy on the British stage threads throughout the study.

3 Although the work by Rossetti included in this volume is not aimed at children, she is known for writing for children as well as for adults.

4 “In fact, literary fairy tales were intended for adult readers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (Seifert 1–2).

5 According to Zipes, “In the seventeenth century, children of all classes listened to these tales. The peasants did not exclude children when stories were told around the hearth, and lower-class wet nurses and governesses related the same tales to children of the upper classes. Moreover, people

of all classes told all types of tales and absorbed them. 'Folk' must be understood as 'inclusive' not exclusive" (*Fairy Tales* 8).

6 The Grimms also drew from the Italian writers and other literary texts as well but as evidenced by Zipes's notes on the sources of the Grimms' tales, the vast majority were women from the Hassenpflug, von Haxthausen, and Wild families, along with Dorothea Viehmann. See Grimms, *Complete* 732–53.

7 For example, for their contributions on Sexton, see Caroline King Barnard Hall's 1988 "Transformations: A Magic Mirror" and Carol Leventen's "Transformation's Silencings." Carter continues to be a center of feminist inquiry, evident in studies like Kimberly Lau's *Erotic Infidelities* (2015); Lydia Brugué and Auba Llompart's recent edited anthology *Contemporary Fairy-Tale Magic* (2020) includes essays on Sexton, Donoghue, Helen Oyeyemi, and Neil Gaiman and their rewritings of classic tales by Perrault and the Grimms like "Snow White," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Cinderella."

8 Maria Tatar's *The Hard Facts* (1987) and Ruth Bottigheimer's *Grimms' Bad Girls* (1987) are important works on female characters in the Grimms, which continue to receive critical attention. Many of the essays in Kay Turner and Pauline Greenhill's 2012 *Transgressive Tales* provide a blend of feminist, gender, and queer readings of tales by the Grimms.

9 The role of *gouverneur* (governor) to a prince was typically fulfilled by a man and Genlis is the only women who ever served in such an office in France.

10 For a history of feminism in nineteenth-century France, see Moses; on the emergence of new associations and presses, see in particular 128–30. Other clubs include the Club de l'emancipation des femmes (Club for the Emancipation of Women), the Association fraternelle des démocrates de deux sexes (Fraternal Association of Democrats of Both Sexes), and the radical Vesuvians. Although Moses focuses on this particular moment, women's periodicals such as the working-class *Tribune des femmes* (Women's tribune, 1832–34) and the *Gazette des femmes* (Women's gazette, 1836–38) gave women an outlet for their intellectual and literary pursuits earlier in the century.

11 On Herder and Tieck and German male writers' relation to Britain, see Brown 6–8.

12 Because of the length of the tales by Ritchie and Sophie de Ségur, we were not able to include them here.

Part I

Nineteenth-Century French Women Write Fairy Tales

Introduction

Anne E. Duggan and Adrion Dula

When it comes to the French fairy-tale tradition, the best-known author today is the seventeenth-century writer Charles Perrault, whose versions of “Cinderella” and “Sleeping Beauty” were made world famous by Walt Disney Studios and whose popularization of the “Mother Goose” storytelling figure was then adapted in countless collections of fairy-tale books and nursery rhymes for children. However, women have always played a significant role in the French fairy-tale tradition, and not just as “Mother Goose” oral storytellers but also, notably, as authors of literary tales. Indeed, the 1690s were dominated by the voices of women writers like Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy, Henriette-Julie de Murat, and Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier, with d’Aulnoy proving to be the most prolific and impactful among them. Written from the context of French salon culture and aimed at adult, aristocratic audiences, they regularly challenged unjust monarchies, arranged marriages, and gender norms that restricted women’s sphere of influence. Throughout the nineteenth century in Britain, France, and the German states, d’Aulnoy’s tales were as well known as those penned by Perrault. The eighteenth century also saw its share of women fairy-tale writers in France, the most notable being Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, whose rendition of “Beauty and the Beast” became the canonical version of the tale and who, along with Sarah Fielding, inaugurated the tradition of the pedagogical tale in France and England; other women writing in the eighteenth century include Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve, Catherine de Lintot, and Louise Levesque. Although many of these eighteenth-century women writers are not as well known as the *conteuses* (or women fairy-tale writers) of the 1690s, their works have been anthologized and have begun to receive critical attention.

This is not the case, however, for nineteenth-century women fairy-tale writers in France such as Stéphanie Félicité de Genlis, Julie Delafaye-Bréhier, Félicité de Choiseul-Meuse, George Sand, or Louise Michel. These

authors do not form a particular movement or collection of writers in the way, for instance, the 1690s *conteuses* or the nineteenth-century German women of the *Kaffeterkreis* do. Their works also do not fit into the better-known and male-dominated traditions of the French fantastic or decadent tale that emerged in the period. It is perhaps for these reasons that their tales have not been anthologized and have not received much critical attention, with the exception of Sand. Choiseul-Meuse is best known for her libertine novels, Sand for her sentimental pastoral novels, and Michel for her anarchism, but their connection to the genre of the fairy tale remains to be explored in depth. Studies of Delafaye-Bréhier's tales are perhaps the most lacking in critical attention. Along with works by Sophie de Ségur—whose fairy tales we were not able to include here owing to their length and our selection criteria—fairy tales penned by this generation of women writers in France have been all but ignored.

However, the works of these women authors shed light on the diverse ways in which fairy tales functioned and were received in nineteenth-century France: as children's literature, as romantic pastoral texts, and as subversive social and political commentary. Nineteenth-century French women writers used the genre of the fairy tale and folk tale to criticize social and gender norms, the institution of marriage, the relative lack of financial independence for women at the time, and class hierarchies and prejudices. As with nineteenth-century woman authors in Great Britain and the German states, French women writers of wonder also deemed the fairy tale an appropriate genre to diffuse subversive or protofeminist critiques of social mores and thus follow the model of the *conteuses* and foreshadow the work of later feminist fairy-tale authors and directors such as Angela Carter and Anne Sexton, in the British tradition, and Amélie Nothomb and Catherine Breillat, in the French tradition.

In some ways, nineteenth-century French women found themselves in a more disadvantageous position than seventeenth- or eighteenth-century aristocratic women, who greatly benefited from the culturally important social institution of the salon, where women and men could actively engage in literary as well as philosophical debates about such issues as the position of women in society or the latest literary trends. In discussing the new social structures of the nineteenth century, Denise Davidson argues that social spaces became increasingly gender segregated: "By the end of the 1820s, social spaces were becoming more clearly defined based on the class

and gender identities of those who filled them. How did this happen? Aristocratic lifestyles encouraged shared male/female spaces, whereas bourgeois society largely relied upon more purely male institutions. As bourgeois modes of behavior grew to dominate, the mixing of the genders in public became a mark of working-class behavior" (132). Thus, postrevolutionary France rejected some of the aristocratic practices that in fact had benefited elite women like d'Aulnoy, Murat, and Lhéritier and promoted their writing.

Such gender-segregated trends explain in part the absence of women writers within the domain of the more celebrated fantastic and decadent tale, which emerged from almost exclusively male literary circles. These include the Petit cénacle, founded by the champion of the fantastic tale, Théophile Gautier, along with Gérard de Nerval and Pétrus Borel; and the Parnassians, which included Catulle Mendès, the son-in-law of Gautier, Anatole France, and Marcel Schwob. Authors of decadent tales in particular express a certain aristocratic longing and cynicism in their tales.[1] Unlike Sand, who questions the existence of fairies and magical clouds, decadent fairy-tale writers like France and Mendès regret the disappearance of fairies and the marvelous from an all-too rational world.

While Choiseul-Meuse and Genlis might share the aristocratic leanings of the decadent writers, their historical position as transitional figures from the Old Regime situate them differently. Genlis in particular does not share the at times cynical relation to the tale tradition and to morality that writers such as France and Mendès embraced. Like writers of the fantastic, Sand blurs the lines between dream or imagination and reality. However, unlike her fantastic counterparts, Sand moves toward a clear resolution, with the tale ending in a firm grounding in reality. Influenced by the midcentury realist movement, in their tales Delafaye-Bréhier and Sand portray somewhat ordinary events in the lives of average people from the middle and lower classes in an unidealized manner rather than depicting the exceptional and idealized heroes and heroines often found in early modern tales by the seventeenth-century aristocratic *conteuses*. For her part, Michel "historicizes" the classical tale by emphasizing its historical, legendary origins, thus also grounding the marvelous in "reality." In some respects, women writing wonder in nineteenth-century France is just as much about women undermining wonder, questioning its validity, or redefining wonder

as metaphor, as it is a way of seeing the marvelous in the every day and in everyday people.

Given these shifts taking place in the conception of social space, it is not surprising that postrevolutionary France was not as friendly to women's rights in general as nineteenth-century England or United States.[2] Women gained much ground in civil status in 1791 and 1792, including certain divorce and inheritance or property rights. However, by 1793 the debate over women's suffrage ended with its abolishment, and women were barred from participating in social and political clubs, such as the women's only Club des citoyennes républicaines et révolutionnaires (Club for Republican and Revolutionary Women Citizens) and the mixed Société fraternelle (Fraternal Society), which had previously admitted both men and women. In addition, with the advent of the Napoleonic code in 1805, married women's submission to their husbands was solidified, and many of their rights as individuals—such as buying, selling, or mortgaging property without their husbands' consent as well as the right to divorce except when a husband's adultery was committed in the home—were removed. Rosemary Lloyd explains that women were essentially viewed as minors and further restricted to the domestic sphere after 1805: "The Napoleonic code of 1805 formalized the dichotomy between masculine public space and feminine private space, assigning women the legal and metaphorical role of minors in the new society; controlling the way they dressed and the kinds of work they could do" (120). Nevertheless, the end of the nineteenth century is marked by important progress in women's rights, with divorce becoming legal again in 1884. As we will see, the fairy tales by women authors included here engage with these historical changes in various ways.

Reading nineteenth-century French women writers of wonder together is particularly important because they do not form a cohesive group, allowing us to view the evolution of the genre in a new light. Nevertheless, several authors share similar themes. In many respects, fairy tales by Genlis and Choiseul-Meuse map the transition from Old Regime to post–French Revolution in their treatment of social class. Both women were *émigrés* or from *émigré* families, members of the French nobility forced to flee France during the French Revolution.[3] After the Revolution, they penned tales that at least appear to problematize the social order under the monarchy, at the same time that they arguably also retain certain idealized notions of the

aristocratic lady, evident in the figures of the princess Amélie (Genlis) and the fairy Coquette (Choiseul-Meuse) of the tales included here. Drawing from the pedagogical style of Leprince de Beaumont and her *Magasin des enfants* (*The Young Misses Magazine*), Delafaye-Bréhier's *Souper de famille, ou nouveaux contes moraux, instructifs et amusans pour les enfants* (*Family Suppers, or, Evening Tales for Young People: In which Instruction Is Blended with Amusement*, 1817), creates a bourgeois-like familial frame narrative. Although the grandfather is a count, the setting is stereotypically bourgeois: the count is surrounded by his brother, the captain, the count's three children, and his eight grandchildren, the latter constituting the target audience for the tales. However, in contrast to Perrault's assertion that his tales are from an oral tradition with a "Mother Goose" tale-teller, in Delafaye-Bréhier's frame tale the stories are often read from books, in similar fashion to d'Aulnoy's fairy-tale collections.

Writing in the early period of the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy, Delafaye-Bréhier's works are also marked by this period of transition in which bourgeois morality and its accompanying idealization of the family blends with a sense of aristocratic Romanticism evident in the tales' pastoral settings. In some respects, the noblewoman Genlis and the bourgeois Delafaye-Bréhier intersect in an aesthetic that draws from aristocratic Romanticism as it evolves into a broader, bourgeois Romantic form. Norbert Elias describes this process in his chapter "On the Sociogenesis of Aristocratic Romanticism in the Process of Courtisation" in *The Court Society* (1983), which clearly lays out the nostalgia for a more pastoral past that initially emerges from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century aristocratic society but that anticipates the Romanticism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the bourgeois Romanticism of the nineteenth century. The writers included here bridge these different Romantic traditions. Whereas Choiseul-Meuse's tales are very clearly influenced by the aristocratic Romanticism of d'Aulnoy, the pastoral tales of Delafaye-Bréhier are marked by the more bourgeois sensibility of Perrault.[4] Writing from a more feminist perspective than Delafaye-Bréhier, Sand also situates her tale included here in a pastoral and more explicitly Romantic and nonaristocratic setting.

While the gendering of social spaces and literary trends like the fantastic tale negatively affected women's sphere of influence in postrevolutionary society, one positive outcome was the increase in literacy and the

accessibility of public education in France, which was favorable to girls. While the Loi Guizot (1833) required that a primary school for boys be available in any commune of over five hundred inhabitants, the Loi Falloux (1850) extended similar regulations to education for girls. However, it was not until the Loi Jules Ferry (1881–82) that public education would become obligatory, free, and secular; before this period, many schools were run by religious officials. In addition, during the nineteenth century, publishing houses and periodicals began to cater to the new demand for children's literature, such as bookseller and publisher Alexis Eymery's publications of novels for children, Pierre-Jules Hetzel's *Nouveau magasin des enfants* (New children's magazine) and *Magasin d'éducation et de récréation* (Education and recreation magazine), and Louis Hachette's series *Bibliothèques rose et vert* (Pink and green libraries).[5] While writers such as Genlis and Delafaye-Bréhier were part of the bourgeoning field of children's literature, by the time Sand and Michel were publishing their works aimed at children, the field was firmly in place. Indeed, Michel's collection of tales, *Le livre du jour de l'an: Histoirettes, contes et légendes pour les enfants* (The book of New Year's Day: Anecdotes, tales, and legends for children, 1872), was explicitly marketed as a holiday gift for children. As is the case for nineteenth-century British women authors of tales, French women engaged in "crosswriting," that is, writing for a dual child-adult audience.[6]

Nineteenth-century French women writers used the fairy-tale genre for many different purposes. Genlis, Sand, Delafaye-Bréhier, and Michel deployed the genre to communicate moral and ethical messages to their child readers; Choiseul-Meuses's tales—like those of d'Aulnoy—read a bit more parodic, even if there appears to be a clear moral message. Genlis and Choiseul-Meuse may also have felt the need to display allegiance to a postrevolutionary regime, which might explain the apparent critique of a problematic nobility, at the same time that the resolution to their tales resides in *not* having commoner heroines marry their noble prince. While aristocratic privilege is critiqued and the nonnoble hero validated, their tales avoid *mésalliance* (marriage between a commoner and a nobleperson), thus maintaining class divisions. As such, these tales are ridden with ambivalence regarding class in postrevolutionary France.

In the case of the tales by Sand and Delafaye-Bréhier, the resolution resides, importantly, in *not* having heroines marry at all, and female independence and self-sufficiency is promoted over heteronormative coupling. Both texts also portray pastoral settings with lower-class female heroines whose survival and, in the case of Sand the heroine's financial independence, depends on the help of older female characters. Sand was a well-known critic of the institution of marriage and an advocate for women's rights. The removal of the marriage plot may be read as a subversive act given that the classic fairy tales in the French tradition, such as those by Perrault, Leprince de Beaumont, and even in many tales by d'Aulnoy, generally espouse the ideal of marriage as women's "happily ever after," even if they critique the ancien régime practice of arranged marriages. The women and young girls in the tales included here are depicted not as the passive princesses à la Disney or Perrault but rather—as in the tales by the *conteuses* and postmodern feminist fairy-tale writers—as independent or self-sufficient, and they save themselves or others because of their hard work, kindness, intelligence, and sense of community.

Influenced by research on Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, scholars historically have looked at women as oral sources of tales and at male scholars as collectors and editors of their stories. While this view has been criticized, more work on female collectors needs to be carried out. Michel proves to be an example of a female collector and editor of tales—indeed David Hopkins considers her a "folklorist"[7]—at the very moment the field of French folklore studies was truly coming into being. Eminent folklorists Emmanuel Cosquin (1841–1919), François-Marie Luzel (1821–95), and Paul Sébillot (1843–1918) started producing their celebrated collections of Lorraine and Breton tales in the 1860s and 1870s, the same period in which Michel was publishing her collections. Ten years before the establishment of the French Société des traditions populaires (Society of Popular Traditions), founded in 1885 by Sébillot, Michel published *Légendes et chansons de gestes canaques* (Kanak legends and epics, 1875), which brought together folklore she collected from the indigenous Kanaks while exiled in New Caledonia due to her activities during the Paris Commune. Importantly, this work can be connected to her anticolonial activism, representing another way the genre was deployed in the hands of nineteenth-century women writers.

Writing during the social and political upheaval in the century following the French Revolution, these women writers of wonder offer important insights into the history and evolution of the fairy tale in France. At the same time that they carried on the tradition of protofeminist fairy tales inherited from the 1690s *conteuses*, they also anticipate the postmodern feminist revisionist fairy-tale writers of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries in, for instance, their implicit critiques of Perrault's passive heroines and their playful and sometimes metacritical approach to the genre. They also play an important historical role in the development of children's literature and folklore studies and even point the way toward anticolonial uses of the tale. Although they did not have a "salon of their own," they engaged—as evident in the introduction to this volume—in textual transhistorical and transnational communities of women writers of wonder from whom they derived legitimacy and inspiration.

1 On the fantastic tale, see Amy Ransom's *The Feminine as Fantastic* (1995). Gretchen Schultz and Lewis Seifert translated and edited a collection of tales from the French fin-de-siècle decadent tradition, whose "cynicism . . . countered positivism in general and naturalism in particular. Beyond its literary and artistic manifestations, decadence could be called a philosophical position that took issue with the celebration of progress" (xxi).

2 Jennifer Waelti-Walters and Steven Hause argue that "[t]he conservative Catholic monarchy of the Bourbon Restoration (1815–30) and Napoléon III's authoritarian Second Empire (1852–70), were less responsive to social innovation, fundamental reform, or the extension of individual rights than were republican America or liberal England" (3), and this affected the progress of women's rights in France.

3 Genlis was forced to emigrate, while Choiseul-Meuse remained in France; however, the latter's grandfather did flee and gained reentry into France under Napoléon.

4 On aristocratic Romanticism in d'Aulnoy, see Duggan, "Nature" 151. Although the message of Delafaye-Bréhier's tales may have more affinities with those penned by Perrault, their narrative forms are closer to what Elizabeth Wanning Harries refers to as the "complex" style of the 1690s *conteuses* (16–17), owing for the most part to her affinity for the frame tale and the blending of many folkloric motifs and tale types to create her tales.

5 Alexis Eymery (1774–1854) worked in publishing and bookselling as early as 1809 and ran his own publishing house from 1812 to 1819 in Paris; he later directed the collection *Bibliothèque de l'éducation*, launched in 1834 by his daughter, Désirée, active from 1834 to 1844. Pierre-Jules Hetzel (1814–86), was known for publishing the works of Jules Verne as well as Sophie de Ségur. Exiled after the future Napoléon III's coup d'état in 1851, he returned to Paris to launch his *Bibliothèque d'éducation et de récréation* and his journal *Magasin d'éducation et de récréation* in 1864. Louis Hachette (1800–64) launched his publishing house in Paris in 1826, which would serve as one of the earliest educational publishers in France.

6 On the notion of crosswriting, see Sandra L. Beckett's *Red Riding Hood for All Ages* (2008).

7 See Hopkin's historical study of French folklore and folklorists, *Voices of the People in Nineteenth-Century France* (25).

Stéphanie Félicité de Genlis

Stéphanie Félicité, comtesse de Genlis (1746–1830) was a well-known writer of plays, novellas, and tales often targeting young readers but appealing to broader audiences, particularly in France and England. She was appointed the position of *gouverneur*, or tutor, of the duc de Chartres's (the future duc d'Orléans's) children, a position that had previously been held by men. Although favorable to some aspects of the French Revolution, as a noble and close associate to the Orléans family, she was forced to flee the country in 1793, going to England and Switzerland, then ending up in Germany. Supporting her return in 1799, Napoléon provided her with an apartment at the Arsenal and supported her literary activities with a pension. Published in 1801, "Pamrose, or The Palace and the Cottage" first appeared in the ninth volume of *La nouvelle bibliothèque des romans* (The New Library of Novels, 16 vols, 1798–1805). It was then serialized in English from August to October 1802 in *The Lady's Magazine, or Entertaining Companion for the Fair Sex* before being anthologized in Genlis's *Contes moraux*, published in Berlin in 1803, then appearing again in 1805 in the second volume of *Nouveaux contes moraux et nouvelles historiques* (New Moral Tales and Historical Novellas).

The introduction to the tale mentions "Mademoiselle Itzig," a reference to Recha Itzig, the blind and unmarried daughter of Miriam [Marianne] and Daniel Itzig, "the head of the most powerful and most privileged Jewish family in Berlin at the time" (Hertz 102). Recha lived with her sister Sara Levy, who hosted an important salon in Berlin, frequented by the writer Achim von Arnim. Arnim rented an apartment from the Itzigs in 1804 and would later marry the sister, Bettina, of another familiar of the Itzig circle, Clemens Brentano. Over twenty years her senior, Genlis considered Recha to be a friend, and Genlis helped her obtain a "machine" (a kind of hand guide) that Recha could use to write to her sister in Vienna.

Genlis's tale, "Pamrose, or The Palace and the Cottage," resembles the longer tales of the 1690s *conteuses* in its novella-like structure with its character development, complicated plots, and melodramatic tone. It

arguably borrows folk motifs that we find in tales like the Grimms' "Cinderella," with the mother's gravesite marking some kind of liminal or sacred site. The tale incorporates her familiar attacks on the philosophers of the Enlightenment, toward whom she expressed great hostility owing in part to their rejection of religion, and it includes her praise of Napoléon, who would become her patron two years after the first edition of *Contes moraux*.

Frontispiece from Stéphanie Félicité de Genlis, *Pamrose, or The Palace and the Cottage* (London: Minerva Press, 1803).

“Pamrose, or The Palace and the Cottage” (1801)

Translated by Anne E. Duggan[1]

Editor’s note from Paris 1806 edition: *The most interesting feature of this little novel is that it isn’t made up at all, it is perfectly true in all its details. The author obtained it from a very trustworthy person, in every respect (mademoiselle Itzig),*[2] *who was personally acquainted with a man who lived at the court of the beneficent princess, and who was witness to this sublime deed. This interesting princess is no longer with us*.

A poor and unfortunate peasant woman, overwhelmed by fatigue and holding in her arms a little girl only two months old, was slowly following the banks of the Rhine at the end of a beautiful summer’s day. “Alas!” she was saying. “I see the palace turrets! . . . Ah! If only I could make it there! . . . The princess is so good! She is a mother; she also has a child she is suckling!” Upon saying these words, the poor wretch tried to hasten her pace. But she came upon a pebble that deeply pierced her bare feet. The pain she experienced was so intense that, unable to continue her path, she sat on a great rock at the foot of a tree. “God! God!” she cried out, bursting into tears, “I am forced to stop, and I see the palace! . . . And my child is asking me in vain to be fed, my milk is dried up! . . . We will die on this stone, and so close to the palace . . .” Her sobs stifled her words; the child was shrieking while trying to find her mother’s dried up breast with her burning mouth. “Innocent little creature!” said the despairing mother. “Ah! If only my tears and my blood could feed you! . . . But good heavens! She no longer cries, her eyes are closing! . . . Must I die twice over! Before surrendering my last breath, must I see her expire! . . . She isn’t moving! . . . Oh! Who will deliver me from this life? . . .”

With these words, she casts[3] a distraught eye upon the rapidly flowing river running beside her. A horrible temptation suddenly seizes her. The excess of her despair revives her, her face regains its color, she squeezes her dying child closely against her chest. In this very instant, the child makes a movement, the mother shudders, she turns her head away, and she begins to cry again; her gaze moves toward the gilded turrets of the palace: “They are

so happy," she said, "these privileged ones of the earth! They are so happy, surrounded by their children, living in abundance! . . . But they also die, and the same God will judge us all, and perhaps the villager will appear before him with more confidence than the wealthy man or the prince!" With these words, she gently lets her weary head rest against the trunk of a tree; she raises her eyes fixedly toward the heavens, and her suffering begins to subside, becoming hazy, like her thoughts: Such vivid pain is only calmed by sublime hope! . . . Courage allows one to assume this pain without complaint, but pious resignation assuages it.

Death was[4] just about to strike this innocent victim of misfortune, when a shining and elegant carriage rapidly passed through this place; it was the princess Amélie who, sitting in the carriage on the side of the river, was the first to see the unfortunate peasant woman. "Oh God!" she cried. "A woman, a mother, collapsed! We must save her." With these words, the postilion stops; the amiable and sensitive Amélie rushes out of the coach.[5] An old lord from her court rushes after her to help her. A plump lady-in-waiting cries out to a lackey to help her out of the carriage, and the pages on horseback who were riding ahead quickly gallop back. Amid all this commotion the lady-in-waiting, forgotten, becomes impatient and starts grumbling, and the princess, advancing toward the peasant woman, sees with pleasure that she reopens her eyes. The princess presents her with some gold coins.

"Oh!" said the unfortunate mother, "this gold is useless to me; what is need is milk, I don't have any more . . . and my child is dying!"

"What?" said Amélie, trembling.

"Yes," the peasant woman continued, "my baby is dying of starvation."

At these words, Amélie, filled with horror and pity, looks at the child who reminds her of the one she was nursing, and whose striking beauty led her to the epitome of compassion, which pierced her heart. "Alas!" she said, "does she still live?" While saying these words, she takes the child's hand and feels this little hand gently squeeze one of her fingers. "No, you will not die," she cried. Then she threw herself to her knees, slid her arm under the child's head, and gave her breast.

"Oh! madame . . ." said the peasant woman, clasping her hands together and raising them toward the heavens. She could not say anything more; the gentle tears of the most ardent gratitude inundated her face. Not being able

to express to her sublime benefactor what she was experiencing, she preferred to pray and to bless her rather than thank her.[6]

In the meantime, the child avidly drank the pure milk, which brought her back to life. All those who witnessed this interesting scene contemplated her in silence, with surprise mixed with tenderness and a sort of amazement, with the exception of the plump lady-in-waiting sitting in the coach sadly fanning herself and not seeing anything that was happening, for the pages, the old courtier, and the servants who surrounded the princess concealed the scene entirely from her.

Who could depict the delight of the peasant woman and the princess upon seeing the child resuscitate and regain movement and color! After ten minutes, the child, satisfied and fortified, released Amélie's breast, looked at her, and smiled. The princess, bathed in tears, gave her a maternal kiss, and immediately rising, "Let us go quickly to the palace," she said, "in order to provide this poor woman with the help she needs; let us take her in the coach." With these words, the lackey, carrying the peasant woman, follows the princess who was carrying the little girl in her arms and who climbed into the coach, to the great astonishment of the lady-in-waiting, quite scandalized at having to give up her seat for a peasant woman. The old courtier installed himself on the driver's seat, and they set off.

The Baroness of Klakenberg (this is the name of the lady of honor[7]) was the person from the eighteenth century who was the most attached to rules of etiquette. She believed there were absolutely no circumstances in life that would dispense one from having to follow them in public, and she found this rule of conduct so perfect that she judged it to be more than sufficient to shape the wit, mores, and principles of princes and nobles—an idea that very much simplifies the education of individuals from these two classes but an idea that is not as new as it is profound. For it seems that quite a large number of teachers had this idea long before Madame the baroness of Klakenberg, although the latter attributed all the honor of it to herself at the little court at ***.

The astonishment of the baroness grew infinitely when she learned that Princess Amélie had just nursed the poor woman's child. "That was assuredly very singular." This was the only reflection the story inspired in her. They arrived at the palace. The peasant woman was given lodging, food, and a good bed; a palace servant was charged with feeding the little

girl, and after having fulfilled all these duties of humanity, the princess retired to her chambers and saw again with more pleasure than ever before her child in the crib. “I just saved one,” she said. “May God protect mine!” The child who was sleeping woke up crying; Amélie took him on her knees, giving him her breast, which he was seeking. “Oh, my child!” she continued, “I had you share your sustenance with an unfortunate being; I would like to think that this action is a good omen of what you will voluntarily do when you are able to understand the laments of the indigent.[8] For my part I only follow the inspiration of maternal love. It is you, my son, whom I thought I saw in this dying child, it is you who spoke for her!”

Just as the gentle Amélie was pronouncing these words, looking with delight upon her child, the door opened, and her husband, the prince, returning from the hunt, entered her chambers. This prince was what one calls a good prince; that is to say, he was neither rough nor haughty. In city streets and in the country, he would tip his hat to all the common folk who greeted him. In his palace, he would chat familiarly with the courtiers. He was not lacking in politeness toward women. Finally, he was almost always smiling, he often laughed out loud, and everyone was in agreement about praising his extreme kindness. This kindness didn’t manifest itself in any other manner. This good prince didn’t give anything, didn’t like anyone, didn’t read, hunted a lot, and would spend five or six hours a day at the table. However, when his favorite, the Count of Sekendorft, would advise him perchance to carry out a good deed (which happened rarely), he wouldn’t refuse to do it. Thus, all the German gazettes would outdo one another in celebrating the goodwill and the popularity of his serene highness, who—quite justly content with his excellent reputation—believed in very good faith to possess all the qualities needed to give distinction to a prince.

The virtuous Amélie had no influence over the opinion of her husband, who did not approve of her nursing because the Count of Sekendorf and the Baroness of Klakenberg found it quite strange that a sovereign princess would be a wet nurse.[9] One could have cited for them the example of Queen Blanche, mother of Saint Louis.[10] But these old practices from such a barbaric age hardly merit being proposed as models. In truth, Queen Blanche knew how to govern a kingdom; she had not done poorly in raising her son; she was of good morals and was not lacking in talent. But at

bottom, she was nothing more than a religious bigot.[11] Besides, she wore a farthingale and had pockets.[12] She was neither *Greek* nor a *philosopher*, and with respect to her enlightenment and merit, who could compare her to our *stateswomen*, who have evaluated, in their infinite wisdom, the different forms of government and who are equally great politicians, profound metaphysicians, good *tacticians*,[13] and even *prophets*? For they predicted, when our enemies of six years were vanquished from all sides, that we would end up triumphing over them; they predicted, when Bonaparte had conquered all of Italy, that Bonaparte would go on to defeat the Austrians. And when Bonaparte had restored tranquility, offered peace to the enemy, and called back the fugitives,[14] they predicted that this hero would save France, and that all parties would agree to admire him, bless him, and cherish him! These are some predictions, while if most extraordinary, are at the very least fulfilled.[15]

But let us return to Princess Amélie. She recounted plainly to her husband the adventure that had just happened to her. The prince, who was never able to judge things on his own, wasn't very sure about what he was supposed to think about this incident. He quitted the princess and went to see the Baroness of Klakenberg, certain that he would find his favorite who had been going there every evening at the same hour for twenty years. The prince spoke about the story his wife had just recounted to him: they told him that the peasant woman was dying and they got him to understand that the princess was most imprudent in nursing the child, who was undoubtedly unhealthy, of a moribund woman. The prince furrowed his brow and asked for Professor Gottingen (who was his doctor). Upon this order, the baroness clearly signaled her approval, and the count observed that it was indeed indispensable to consult a clever doctor. The prince, extremely proud to have come up with this bright idea, repeated several times, with a capable air, that he was going to have the professor clearly explain things on this subject. This was not a simple proposition, for Professor Gottingen, a mysterious and tight-lipped charlatan, hardly ever spoke except in monosyllables, and when one strongly urged him to elaborate, he only ever responded with ambiguity.

He arrived, and he listened attentively to the prince with dismay; then, after several minutes of meditation, he declared that it was essential, before anything else, that he examine the peasant woman, her child, and the

princess’s milk. All this was carried out. The poor princess received a severe reprimand from her husband. The professor prescribed for her to take two or three vials of a syrup he concocted and to wean the young prince, who was eight months old. Amélie promised to do everything they wanted, but when she was alone she threw the syrup out the window and continued to nurse her child, which she did successfully in secret for three or four months. However, the unfortunate peasant woman died two days later, which led people to highly praise the prudence of the doctor whose drugs, it was said, undoubtedly saved the princess from a terrible sickness; they added that it was most fortunate that the young prince was weaned, for the professor did not disguise at all the fact that the princess’s milk had become a veritable poison. Nonetheless the deceased peasant woman’s little girl was doing very well, but the professor warned that she had in her blood scorbutic and tuberculous humors, which would develop sooner or later.

Amélie, who had questioned the peasant woman, knew that this unfortunate soul possessed a dilapidated little cottage near Bingen, and that her husband, sick and bedridden for two months, lived in this cabin. The princess sent him some help, and three days after the death of the peasant woman, she resolved to go see this unfortunate peasant. The prince having gone out hunting, Amélie, accompanied only by the Baron of Sargans (an old lord she liked very much) and a trustworthy chambermaid, climbed into a little carriage and went to Bingen.

The peasant, whose name was Herman, had known about his wife’s death for two days. Amélie found that he was still sick and plunged in the greatest affliction. Herman was a man of thirty, born with wit, a beautiful soul, and a singular personality. The son of a wealthy merchant from Mainz, he had received a good education and continued his studies until the age of eighteen. But in this period, his father became bankrupt and died shortly thereafter. The young Herman, finding himself without any resources, made the decision to enlist. He served ten years with distinction in the king of Prussia’s army. At the end of this period, having obtained his leave, he married a young Silesian[16] and returned with her to his country. He purchased a little cottage and two acres of land near Bingen, but bad harvests, grief, and sickness led him to fall into the most awful misery. His unfortunate wife, lacking in food for two days, had finally decided to have recourse to the princess, and unable to continue her route, she would have perished with her child without the goodwill of Amélie.

“I am coming to make you a proposition,” said the princess to the unfortunate Herman. “It seems to me that I have become the mother of the child who received from me maternal help that preserved her life: if you leave her with me, I will raise her and take care of her livelihood.”

With these words, Herman sighed, and after a moment of silence: “She belongs to you, madame,” he responded. “Without you, she would no longer exist. I must leave her with you; otherwise, what could I do for her!”

“No, Herman,” continued the princess, “I don’t at all want necessity to force you to make this sacrifice. I will ensure a pension for you which, in your state, will allow you to live a life of ease. Whether you keep or you yield your daughter to me, this pension is yours. Here is the first year, which I want to pay you in advance. In addition, I will have the necessary repairs made to your home and have it furnished. Subsequently I will increase your little domain, and if you prefer to keep your daughter, I promise I will provide her with a dowry when she attains a marriageable age. Now choose.”

Upon saying these words, Amélie set a purse down on a wooden stool. Herman, instead of responding, stared at Amélie, and his eyes filled with tears. “Ah well!” Amélie continued, quite touched. “You will thus leave her with me?”

“Ah! madame,” Herman responded, “give her your virtues; this will be the greatest of your gifts. However,” he continued, “permit me not to accept the pension . . .”

“What?”

“No, madame, I am no lazybones who needs your protection: it is gracious of you to come to the assistance of an unfortunate man who didn’t merit his fate, but may it only be by providing him the means to resume his work again.”

The princess, surprised and charmed by Herman’s opinion and language, questioned him with such spirited interest that immediately breeds confidence. Herman told her his story, and after a long discussion it was decided, despite noble resistance on the part of Herman, not that he would receive a pension, for he obstinately refused it, but that he would keep the purse, that the cottage would be repaired and furnished, and that he would have some cows and three or four acres of land.

The princess had a very beautiful pair of earrings that her mother had left her; she secretly had them sold and received ten thousand francs for them, which were employed to raise a small fortune for Herman, who found himself, some months later, in possession of a good home, a vast barnyard, a prairie, a wheat field, and a great garden. Amélie, upon seeing the abundance and peace where she had seen indigence and despair, upon receiving blessings from an honest and grateful man, would say to herself with great delight: “All of this comes from these heavy pendeloques that were tearing my ears off![17] Oh! would there be a woman so abject and so denatured to prefer to the happiness I’m experiencing the juvenile pleasure of wearing shiny pompons!”

No, we shall not defame human nature; no, almost any woman, in the situation of which Amélie was speaking, would have thought like her. But there are so few who are put to the test. When one doesn’t have any diamonds, one wants to have them; when one has them, one keeps them. We are harsh out of habit, obliviousness, ignorance. In order to love, one must know; if one so commonly prefers frivolity to well-doing, it is above all out of the lack of tests of virtue.

In the meantime, despite the predictions of Professor Gottingen, Herman’s child recovered and maintained the most brilliant health. Nothing could equal her freshness, her beauty, and her kindness. As soon as she turned three, Amélie took her with her and named her Pamrose. All this was severely criticized within the society of the Baroness of Klakenberg. “*What will happen with this little girl? What will become of her?*” the baroness would repeat, shrugging her shoulders. While some disapproved so judiciously of Amélie’s conduct, this kind princess indulged in her penchant for doing good and hardly gave a thought to what others might think or say. She was the mother of two boys, one the age of Pamrose, the other, named Frédéric, twelve years old. The latter, despite Amélie’s education, was excessively spoiled. The prince his father lent dignity to disdaining Amélie’s advice. “I want,” he would say, “my sons to be raised according to my principles.” And yet on this point he had neither principles nor any notions. He did not get involved whatsoever in his children’s education; he relied only on Frédéric’s governor without ever asking him a single question about his student.[18] The governor had the same confidence in his undergovernor, and the latter granted precisely the same degree of esteem to

a *valet de chambre*—an ignorant flatterer—who, in this way, was in reality the prince's only instructor.

Amélie had consecrated the rock upon which Pamrose's mother was found dying. A hundred feet from this site, Amélie had a cabin constructed in the middle of a field in which were placed two cows. The cottage was given to an honest and poor peasant family, who were provided with a pension by the princess and were charged by her to go often to visit the rock over the course of each day and, in case they would find poor and tired travelers, to offer them a vessel filled with milk. The good and sensitive Herman obtained from Amélie the right to plant next to the elm tree that shaded the rock a cypress and a rosebush, touching emblems to Pamrose and her mother. This site was named the Rock of Hospitality.

Pamrose, raised to cherish her virtuous father, would often visit him, and the least agreeable time of her life was not that spent in Herman's cottage. The latter had an older brother who, having made a small fortune in business, had been back in England for two years and, dedicating himself to agriculture just like Herman had purchased in his vicinity a pretty farm in which he had retired with his family, composed of a wife and two children, a daughter the age of Pamrose, and a boy a couple of years older. Pamrose never played in the palace with the young princes, or with the daughters of the ladies of the court, whose mothers forbid them from becoming familiar with a little peasant girl. As such, she discovered that one becomes quite bored in a beautiful gilded salon. But received with open arms at the cottage by her father, her little cousin Anna, and the young William, her [other] cousin, who would give her flowers, fruits, and cakes and who would play with her with as much gaiety as indulgence, she believed, quite naturally, without any philosophical or moral reasoning, that one is much happier in a cottage than in a palace.

This manner of thinking became stronger with age. When Pamrose had attained her fourteenth birthday, her benefactress, who passionately loved her, confided in her about some of her personal sorrows concerning her children. Pamrose, who was as witty as she was sensitive, easily understood that Amélie was not any happier as a wife than as a mother. Pamrose would contrast the situation of this charming princess to that of her aunt, Herman's sister-in-law, who, cherished by her husband and her children, represented for her every day, amid her family, the picture of the purest felicity; and

Pamrose would say to herself in secret: “No, happiness doesn’t live in these sumptuous dwellings; in order to avoid the gaze and envy of the vulgar, it retreated, along with innocence and simplicity, under the humble roof of the peaceful farmer.”

Pamrose never attended courtly ceremonies and festivals, but she was sometimes seen with the princess. Her beauty was already capturing all eyes: she combined the most attractive graces and ravishing talent with charming features. She would never spend much time at her father’s except for visits because her teachers would take up all her mornings. But at fifteen, only rarely taking lessons, enjoying reading and the arts, and being able to do this on her own quite fruitfully, she obtained permission from Amélie to spend two or three days with her father every week. Herman had arranged for her in the most elegant simplicity chambers next to his. There was a fortepiano, a harp, and books. When Pamrose would go to the cottage, she would leave her beautiful clothes and her jewelry behind in the palace. She would keep only Amélie’s portrait, and shedding herself of all the trappings of luxury, she would put on a peasant bodice, a white petticoat, a straw hat; and her figure, far from being diminished, only benefited from it. For she appeared so charming, wearing a simple cloth dress, that she was incomparable in her pastoral costume. No other peasant girl had the delicatesse of her complexion and features, the whiteness of her hands, and the grace of her manners: she was a shepherdess from Virgil or Gessner.[19]

She would always find her family assembled at her father’s home, where her uncle, her aunt, her cousin Anna, and her cousin William, now twenty-years old, would come to receive her. William enjoyed work and tilled the land, but he would also read, especially during the long winter evenings. He knew a bit of music, like all German peasants, and like the majority of them, he could play the flute with exactitude and charm. He never failed, when they were waiting for Pamrose, to pick almost all the flowers from his father’s garden, bring them to his uncle’s home, and decorate his cousin’s room with them. In addition, knowing that Pamrose loved birds, he had built in Herman’s garden a pretty little birdhouse. Finally, William was attentive and gentle in manner and had an interesting physiognomy, a pure and profoundly sensitive heart. Pamrose loved William and the good Anna as if she had been their sister. Accustomed since her most tender childhood to consider her cousin like a brother, she never had this type of timidity

with him that she was already experiencing with the young people of William's age. But William, for some time now, showed more reserve and less gaiety. Pamrose did not notice this, for he continued to have the same consideration for her and paid her the same attention.

Pamrose would always arrive at the cottage on Saturday in order to spend the entire day, dedicated to rest, with her family. On Sundays, they would go to church in the morning and in the afternoon, and worldly people, even the most pious, could not imagine the extent to which, for villagers, these religious duties were so sweet to fulfill. Men will always be content to find themselves united when they can believe that it is, at the same time, the same sentiment and the same opinion that brings them together; they thus see each other with goodwill and interest that equally satisfies their heart and their self-love. And this is what is hardly ever seen except in the country church. Besides, the *parish church* is itself interesting in the eyes of the man of the fields! It is there where he received his first lessons of virtue! It is at this altar that he married! It is here where he baptized his children! It is there where, in his early youth, he would sing at the lectern with such pleasure! It is there where he comes to pray with faith! It is there where he hopes, and where he consoles himself![20]

One can become weary of the pleasures of which austere morality disapproves. One never tires whatsoever of those that are regarded as sacred duties and that we recall as good actions. The pomp of religious ceremonies raises the soul of peasants and deliciously occupies their leisure time. The great festivals of the year are eras of their lives: children crowned with roses who follow the numerous processions, mothers and old people who contemplate them, young girls who adorn the church altars with flowers, who decorate festival altars,[21] who make nativity scenes, and who gather to sing carols, experience more vivid emotion than profane festivals are able to inspire, about which we become so quickly sated and indifferent.

Modern philosophers! have you truly reflected on all this? I do not believe so, but the friends of humanity must think about it.

When she would leave the cottage to return to the palace, Pamrose was always accompanied by William and Anna, but William, for more than a year, no longer wanted to go to the palace. Without giving a reason for this whim, he insisted on stopping at the Rock of Hospitality. Good Anna alone

would accompany Pamrose, and upon returning, she would find William on the rock, sitting near the rosebush, and plunged in the deepest thought.

The royal prince of ***, traveling through on his way to Prussia, stopped for several days at Amélie's court. There were, upon this occasion, the most agreeable parties, and the Baron of Sargans wanted to give one. He supposed that Pamrose could be invited to a private home, although the ball was supposed to be honored by the presence of princes. Amélie approved of this idea, and Pamrose was not insensitive to the pleasure of appearing in a brilliant assembly, accompanying her dignified benefactress. Pamrose was entering her seventeenth year. Until then, raised somewhat sheltered and in simplicity, no vain emotion whatsoever had profaned her young heart. But when, the day before the party, in the morning, she was brought a dress from Amélie of white satin and crepe, trimmed with roses from the fields, she was dumbfounded. She immediately tried on this charming dress; then, looking at herself in a mirror, she thought she was seeing herself for the first time, or, for the very first time, she compared herself, in her imagination, to the young women she knew, and when one allows oneself such parallels, one never fails to make it in one's own favor . . . After this examination, her first inclination was to tell herself: "I would like William to see me with this finery." And the second was to think about the ball. Against her nature, Pamrose was unable to busy herself with anything during the rest of the afternoon; she was at the same time agitated and distracted. It was a Saturday; she wrote to her father that she couldn't go to the cottage. Not really knowing why, she didn't talk to him at all about the party, but she was insistently demanding that he send Anna and William to her the next day in the afternoon; she added that if William didn't come she would be *truly displeased with him*.

The next day after dinner,[22] Pamrose, alone in her room, sat at her dressing table to get ready, and once she was dressed, she sent her chambermaid out of the room, sat down in an armchair, and took out a book. She was looking every minute at her watch; she was waiting for William. She was thinking about the ball, and in this confusion of ideas, I don't know what instinct made her suddenly lose the desire to see William and even led her to fear that he would come. Each instant, each reflection increased this fear; her agitation became so painful that she wanted to go to Amélie's before the indicated time in order to avoid his arrival. She gets up and looks for her gloves and her fan; in this moment, she hears William's

voice! She trembles, she blushes, a violent heart palpitation cuts off her breath . . . The door opens, and William and his sister emerge. With the appearance of Pamrose, beautiful as an angel, and in her dazzling attire, the good Anna makes a loud exclamation, expressing her astonishment and her admiration. But William pales, he stops two feet before the door, he leans on the back of a chair, crying out: "*Ah! Pamrose!*" He pronounced this word in such a reproachful and woeful tone that Pamrose understood all its signification. Her eyes encountered those of William, she read into his soul, and she fell into an armchair, bursting into tears. Anna, confused by this scene, was becoming distressed, without understanding why; she was reflecting, with extreme surprise, on her dismayed brother, and Pamrose in tears. Finally, William, revived by Pamrose's sensitivity, approached her: "Dear Pamrose," he said to her, "this is why, for a long time now, I didn't want to come here. It isn't in a palace that I love to see you, it isn't in these rich clothes that I find sweetness in looking at you: here, I no longer find Pamrose; here, William is no longer her brother—"

"He is and will always be," interrupted Pamrose. "Oh William!" she continued, "a childish vanity led me to lack delicacy, and what a wrong toward someone one loves! I wanted you to see me in this dress, and now I despise, I detest, all this finery; I'm going to get undressed, I will not go out at all." As she was pronouncing these words, someone entered to tell her that Amélie was calling for her; William beseeched her to go and find the princess. Pamrose, troubled and afflicted, was hesitating; William and his sister left her, and Pamrose submitted to Amélie's orders.

It was in good faith that Pamrose would have wanted to dispense herself from attending the ball. However, she had to accompany Amélie, who saw very well that Pamrose seemed sad, but she attributed the alteration that she noticed on her face to timidity that the idea of appearing in such a great gathering was causing her. Amélie, after having well examined her Pamrose with all the satisfaction of a good mother, had the Baroness of Klakenberg alerted, who came immediately with her daughter, a young woman of eighteen years, the spitting image of her mother and, consequently, vain, dry, disdainful, and most impertinent. The baroness who did not know that Pamrose was going to be at the ball, made a gesture of surprise upon seeing her: "What!" she said, "Mademoiselle *Herman* is going to accompany madame? . . . Assuredly, the dress is superb."[23]

“Superb, no; but it suits her well, don’t you agree?”

“But Mademoiselle *Herman*, isn’t she quite surprised to be wearing it?”

“Oh! not at all; things of this kind of futility could only astonish a fool. But the Baron of Sargans is waiting for us: let’s go.” Upon saying these words, Amélie went out; the baroness, furious, followed her, yelling, “*Go ahead*, my *daughter*,” which signified “Take good care that the daughter of Herman doesn’t go ahead of you.” Mademoiselle de Klakenberg, who shared the noble indignation of her mother, rushed proudly in her wake, rudely elbowing the humble Pamrose who assuredly was not dreaming of competing with her over *the honor of a frivolous advantage*.

In the carriage, Mademoiselle de Klakenberg, sitting in front with Pamrose, installed herself in such a manner as to crumple up as much as possible the elegant dress she envied. They spoke little: the baroness was fuming, and her daughter was no less displeased. Despite her kindness, the princess was hurt, and her hostility was showing; Pamrose, stupefied and confused, maintained a gloomy silence.

They arrived at the baron’s palace. All eyes were on Pamrose and they gazed fixedly upon her; she eclipsed everything: one only saw her.[24] The royal prince of *** danced three times with her and left the ball without knowing that a young lady of the most ancient and illustrious birth, named Mademoiselle de Klakenberg, ever existed. Among these conquests, Pamrose—simple, modest, and timid—behaved most perfectly. It is true that the thought of William preserved her from vanity: sad and dissatisfied with herself, she was reproaching herself for being at the ball and was invincibly distracted. Envy itself could not criticize her; the hatred against her was only more ardent.

Amélie’s eldest son, Prince Frédéric, who inherited from his father the habit of judging only according to what others thought, was quite struck by the enthusiasm Pamrose inspired in all the men. Until then he had barely noticed her; he had seen in her nothing more than a young, reserved girl, which did not suit his mores, and he had thought, after the opinion of the ladies at court, that Pamrose had coarse features and wit.[25] But the praise lavished upon her led to a strange revolution in his head: he suddenly became persuaded that he was madly in love with her, and the next day he didn’t hesitate at all to confide this important secret to his intimate friend, the Baron of Klakenberg, son of the baron. This young man, twenty-six

years old and weaned on the *philosophical* writings of Voltaire and Diderot, believed himself to be a profound *thinker* because he put *into practice* all the Epicurean and impious maxims of the philosophers he admired.[26] He retained all the vanity of a great German lord, but he had purged ridicule from this prejudice by courageously renouncing, and with no turning back, all the Gothic principles of morality.

Quite flattered by the confidence of the *crown prince*, and charmed to see forming another intrigue in the palace, the baron confirmed the prince in the idea that he had a violent, and consequently, *invincible* passion. He easily persuaded him that he shouldn't have the least scruple about seeking to corrupt a young person whom his mother cherished and had raised, and he even emphasized that the princess, *deep down*, would be quite pleased that he loved *this little girl*, because this attachment could remove him from a licentious life of which Amélie did not approve. Advised in this way, the prince wrote to Pamrose a declaration of his love dictated by the baron, and he put this letter in his pocket in order to anticipate a favorable occasion to give it to her himself.

Two days later, two superb horses and a very elegant carriage he had one of his squires purchase were fetched for him. It was exactly the time of the afternoon promenade when this brilliant carriage arrived in the great courtyard of the palace. The prince was alerted to the fact that the horses were not yet well trained, but he prided himself in leading them perfectly, and he conceived of the idea to convince his mother and Pamrose to go for a little ride with him.

He goes up to the princess's study, certain to find her alone with Pamrose. He persuades her to come see his horses and carriage and to try them out. Amélie refuses at first but ends up yielding on the condition that they go only as far as the Rock of Hospitality. The carriage had only two seats. The princess and Pamrose settle in; the prince sits on the bench and departs with great haste, without waiting for the pages, and without calling the footmen.

They were hardly beyond the palace when the horses became spirited. Pamrose, who was quite afraid, naively expressed a bit of her fright. The prince assured her that there wasn't a horse on earth that he wasn't capable of subduing. Upon saying these words, he stood up with a triumphant air and cracked his whip. The horses kicked back and reared up in such a

violent and extraordinary manner that the prince, who was standing, lost his balance and was thrown from the carriage. Amélie let out a lamentable cry. At that instant, the horses, no longer having a driver, bolted, following the bank of the Rhine that leads to the Rock of Hospitality. But while running with inconceivable speed, they were shaving the edge of the roadway on the side of the river . . .

Amélie and Pamrose, equally terrified and in each other's arms, were facing an inevitable death when suddenly, thirty feet from the rock, a man rushed up to the head of the horses and, with a strong arm seizing them by the bridle, stops them, shouting: *Pamrose, climb down! Princess, climb down!* Pamrose recognized with great emotion the voice of her liberator; it was William! . . . She revives, opens the door, and, supporting a faint Amélie, she climbs down with her, thanking the heavens and William! . . .

Amélie sits on the rock, saying with a weak voice: *My son! my son! what has happened to him?* Upon uttering these words, she lost the use of her senses. Pamrose, bathed in tears, takes Amélie in her arms while calling William who, after having firmly tied the horses to two trees, came and threw himself at Pamrose's feet, happy to find himself here on the pretext of saving the princess whose head he was supporting while Pamrose gave her smelling salts. For the first time, Pamrose saw someone faint, and her fright equaled her shock and her pain! "Oh God!" she was crying, "the paleness of death covers her face! . . . She is no longer breathing! . . . Ah! Must I lose her! Must I see her die on this rock where her benevolence brought me back to life!" Finally, Amélie reopened her eyes, and the first thing she did was to ask for her son. At that moment, the prince was seen coming. He was limping a bit, for he was injured from his fall. But having no dangerous wound, he got away with some stiffness and two or three bruises.

Upon seeing him, Amélie gave way to a burst of the purest joy. She embraced Pamrose a thousand times and thanked William with extreme sensibility. She called him her liberator, and the prince, vexed by or, rather, jealous of all these praises, quite abruptly interrupted his mother to prevail upon her to return on foot to the palace. The princess responded that she was feeling so weak that it would be impossible for her to walk. William offered to go fetch a carriage for her with different horses, which she accepted. William started walking away, saying that he would return shortly.

He flew to the carriage, climbed up, and took the reins standing up in the manner of Holstein peasants;[27] and, most gracefully, without fearing *untamed* horses, he left at a gallop. The prince, offended by his audaciousness, and especially by his skill, yelled to leave the carriage there. William didn't appear to hear him and continued his route. Pamrose's gaze followed him with a sort of pride mixed with worry. Amélie praised this young man; Pamrose was listening, full of emotion, and when the princess had stopped speaking, Pamrose kissed her hands as if to thank her for doing him justice. Although the prince was not a keen observer of human behavior, this naive gesture didn't escape him, and he knew, with an inexpressible resentment, that William was his rival.

The carriage arrived and they went back to the palace. Prince Frédéric, who had not yet given Pamrose his love letter, did not think it appropriate to give it to her on this day. Besides, he wanted to consult with his confidant about his jealousy. He was most discouraged, but the baron mocked his fears, and regarding a rivalry he believed to not be terribly formidable, the prince regained all his passion, and the next day Pamrose received the letter. She was indignant and took it immediately to her benefactress. So the latter confided in Pamrose that she had great plans for her establishment. "The Count of ***," she continued, "is in love with you. He is thirty-five years old, he is worthy of esteem, he enjoys a great fortune, and he is determined to marry you. He confided this secret to me alone. We had agreed that this marriage wouldn't take place for another year, but due to the madness of my son, I am inclined to hasten this forward. As such, my dear Pamrose, go today to your father's home to inform him about this wonderful news, and ask for his consent. I imagine," added the princess, smiling, "that he will not refuse. Tell him that the count will give him a small piece of land and a pretty country house near the castle where you will spend seven or eight months each year, such that you will not be separated from this good father who is so dear to you."

During this discussion, Pamrose, distressed and trembling, couldn't hold back her tears; she didn't respond at all, and the next day she left for the cottage. When she was alone with her father, she told him everything that had happened between her and the princess.

"Well!" said Herman when she ceased speaking. "Well! my daughter, what do you think about this proposal?" With this question Pamrose

blushed and lowered her eyes. “Do you have ambitions?” Herman continued. “No, my father,” responded Pamrose, “and I feel that this marriage will never make me happy.” With these words, the good Herman joyously embraced Pamrose. “Oh, my daughter,” he cried, “you don’t know how happy you make me! But don’t think you’re making a sacrifice by refusing this great fortune. If you were to accept it, nothing but distaste, humiliations, would accompany this false grandeur! You would leave a family whose honor you uphold for a new family who would blush at yours. You would be the last person within your class, and by attaching yourself to the one in which destiny placed you, your virtues, your grace, and your moderation will always give you the highest rank. Finally, you’re sacrificing vanity and all the false and petty pleasures of luxury and frivolity, but the true ones will remain with you: peace, friendship, abundance, a comfortable dwelling, fertile fields, a beautiful orchard, and flowers. Keep, my Pamrose, always keep this humble attire, and give your faith only to he who will receive it with joy and gratitude, to he whose morals and character you know.” Here Herman stopped, and Pamrose, touched, gazing at him with her eyes full of tears, seemed by her look to be asking for *a name* from him that he had not yet pronounced.

“Well! my father . . .” she finally said, blushing.

“Do you want,” continued Herman, “me to call William?”

“Oh! no . . . but talk to me.”

“Didn’t you figure out the wish of my heart and his?”

“My father! my tender father! . . .”

“Will you grant it, this wish I made in your childhood?”

“My father, I am at your disposal.”

With these words, Herman got up and hastily went out and returned shortly thereafter holding by the hand a distraught William, who, falling at Pamrose’s feet, could only express his joy, his astonishment, and his happiness through all his tears. They agreed that the happy William would receive the hand of Pamrose in one month but that they wouldn’t speak about this engagement until they received the approbation of the princess.

Pamrose returned to the palace. In retaking another attire, in seeing the beautiful chambers and all the trappings of pomp and grandeur again, she felt a disagreeable sensation that resembled regret. She was frightened by it,

for she couldn’t conceive that one could envy for a minute what one did not value. She didn’t realize that these passing contradictions came from the imagination and not from the heart. But upon thinking about William, about her father, this troublesome impression dissipated quickly. She plunged into the bottom of her soul; she found her feelings that returned all her tranquility to her.

The princess was quite impatient to know Herman’s response, and it was not without discomfort that Pamrose told her that her father refused his consent. Amélie’s surprise was excessive.

“Herman has lost his head!” she exclaimed.

“But console yourself, my dear child, I will go see him tomorrow, I’ll speak to him, and—”

“Oh! Madame, he has irrevocably decided . . .”

“That is impossible: what more could he want?”

“A son-in-law according to his heart, and please bear with me, according to my own . . .”

“What! And who then?”

“The one who saved the life of my benefactress.”

“William! . . .”

“It is him whom I love.”

“You prefer William to the Count of ***! . . .”

“It is my father’s choice . . .”

“And yours?”

“Yes, if I am permitted to choose.”

With this formal avowal, Amélie, profoundly hurt, was a moment without responding. Then, continuing: “I admit,” she said, “that I had prided myself in inspiring more elevation of the soul in you and that I hadn’t given you such a distinguished education for you to then return to the same state from which I took you . . .”

“Ah! Madame,” exclaimed Pamrose, “your good actions are not lost at all: Pamrose will always be pure and grateful. The talents I owe to you will not shine, it is true, in society, but they will form the charm of my solitude and will not arouse envy. I will enjoy happiness without inspiring hatred. Finally, deign consider that I will always live near you, and that the

splendor of rank and fortune shouldn’t seduce a tender heart that you formed.”

“That is enough, Pamrose,” resumed Amélie in a gentler tone. “Think about this a little longer before deciding. In eight days, you will bring me your final answer.”

Amélie, in a most natural feeling of vanity, was passionately hoping that her student would make a brilliant marriage. However, she couldn’t help herself from admiring deep down inside the resolution that was upsetting her plans. She herself had too beautiful a soul not to feel, upon reflecting on this, that true grandeur is the contempt of conventional goods and that a common person would have accepted with joy the fortune that Pamrose disdained. It was a lot for a princess to think about all this, but Amélie nevertheless didn’t desire any less intensely to see Pamrose married to a great lord.

Pamrose, at the end of eight days, repeated everything she had said in the first conversation. Amélie became moody and sulked, but regaining quickly her natural goodness, she ended up gracefully giving her consent, adding that since William wished to remain in his current state, she would provide as a dowry for Pamrose a few acres of land and a beautiful flock of sheep. But she insisted on secrecy about all these things, and they agreed that the wedding would be held quietly and without ceremony and that it wouldn’t be announced until after the celebration.

Ten days before the date set for the wedding, Pamrose, shedding forever the clothes she had worn at court, dressed in the costume of a peasant that she would not relinquish again. While getting dressed in this manner, her heart tightened, and in order to justify in her own eyes these involuntary emotions of weakness and vanity, which mixed with her sadness, she was repeating to herself: *I’m going to leave my benefactress . . . I regret only Amélie!* A trembling Pamrose went to see the princess who was waiting for her in her study. Pamrose threw herself at her feet, pouring out a flood of tears.

“Oh, my child!” said Amélie, pressing her against her breast. “Vain prejudices initially led me to combat your sublime resolution; now, I admire it and recognize that the choice of a pure and sensitive heart will also be the one of reason! Pride couldn’t blind you; happiness will be your reward! You will find it in a lifestyle agreeable to your nature, in the fidelity of a spouse,

and in the virtues of your children. Ah! never regret the deceptive splendor that you're sacrificing! In the midst of the pomp that surrounds me, under this gilded veneer, if you only knew how many tears I have shed, how much constraint and ennui I have endured, and how much natural sensibility, self-reflection, and effort I've needed in order to not become corrupt! Go to your happy cottage; go to this gentle sanctuary, protect yourself from vice and bad people. I will come here often to see you, and if you weren't so dear to me, it is only here, henceforth, that I could know envy! . . ."

Pamrose, revived, encouraged by the caresses and benedictions of her noble benefactress, tore herself away from her, and followed by her father's old servant who had come to fetch her, she went out of the palace to go to the cottage.

A few steps away from the palace, she stopped, and turned around to gaze upon it: "Adieu, magnificent dwelling," she said. "Adieu, cherished abode of my virtuous benefactress! Pamrose, raised within your walls, will not appear here again; Pamrose, from now on, under her pastoral roof, will no longer be envied!" This last idea, far from appeasing Pamrose's regrets in this moment even heightened her secret bitterness; tears rolled down her cheeks. "Adieu," she said again in a plaintive voice, and hastening her pace, she dashed away. This painful emotion was the last breath of a burgeoning vanity that nature, love, and friendship would stamp out forevermore in Pamrose's innocent and sensitive heart.

She met William, who was waiting for her at the Rock of Hospitality. The remainder of the way was an enchantment for her. Herman came up to her, and this good father took both Pamrose and William in his arms with great delight; Pamrose who was coming back to his home to remain! He hurriedly led her to her room; she found a great basket, sent by the princess, containing the most elegant trousseau chest, whose clothing took the form of peasant garb.[28] Next to this present was another gift from Amélie: a mahogany table, covered with silverware, and a tea set in lovely English china. Finally, the princess had also sent, for her Pamrose, six superb orange trees and an enormous quantity of potted flowers. "My daughter," said Herman, "enjoy all your possessions without fearing that so much happiness together could arouse envy. We will always be simple, modest, and charitable; the poor will bless our opulence, and our neighbors will not be jealous at all. They were all expecting to see you become a great lady; by

entering into their class, you flatter them, you ennoble them before their very eyes. They will forgive you effortlessly your superiority. The preference you give to pastoral life will suffice in curing ambition and avenging us for the haughtiness of the highborn."

This was a day of festivities. Anna was supposed to marry her sweetheart, the son of a farmer, the next day. They danced all night long, and Pamrose, rendered forevermore to simple nature, was comparing with delight this pastoral soirée to the very tumultuous and sad ball given by the Baron of Sargans. It was decided that Anna would be married at her father's home and that the entire family would go the next day to the wedding and would spend two days with the newlyweds.

However, Prince Frédéric, not having the least inkling about Pamrose's wedding plans, and strongly encouraged by Baron de Klakenberg's advice, thought that he should in no way be disheartened because a little peasant girl had had the impertinence to disdain his declaration of love. Taking spiteful pride for violent passion, he devised with his dignified friend an audacious plan he decided to execute without delay. The very next day, having received all his information, he knew that Pamrose would sleep that very night at her uncle's home and that she would be lodged in a small and completely isolated room, having near her only a servant whom Frédéric bribed and who agreed to let him into Pamrose's room when everyone would be sleeping.

Innocent Pamrose, after having spent a joyful day at her cousin Anna's wedding, retired to her room at midnight. It was the last days of autumn; a harsh wind was rising at this moment with so much violence that Pamrose was a little frightened. She went to bed and was beginning to fall asleep when she heard some rustling. She had a lamp burning on the table, and looking toward the door, to her horror, she saw Prince Frédéric entering her room! She cried out piercingly.

"Calm down," said the prince. "I only want to speak to you. Your cries cannot be heard; fear not, and deign listen to me . . ."

Pamrose, calling the servant in vain, realized that this indignant creature was bribed by the prince. Hopeless, beside herself, she fancied that she would be able to flee. She rushes out of her bed: the prince tries to seize her in his arms. Animated by a supernatural courage, Pamrose struggles while crying out: "O God, protector of innocence, save me!" Upon saying these

words, she pushes the prince with so much force that he took two steps back. At this moment, the floors opened up with a terrible noise; a deep chasm appears under Frédéric's feet. He falls in, he disappears; and the chasm quickly closes up.

"Oh, amazing prodigy!"[29] cried Pamrose, falling to her knees. She remained several minutes in this position; then, hastily putting on a dress and taking her lamp, she rushed out of her room and went to wake up her father. Herman was strangely surprised to see his daughter so pale, disheveled, half-naked, and at two in the morning. She was so troubled and so shaken she couldn't speak. She was only repeating: "Oh my father! a miracle, a miracle saved me! . . ." Finally, calming down a bit, she recounted everything that had just happened to her, and she was quite surprised how little affected Herman was upon hearing the story of the so-called miracle. Herman was struck only by the infamous actions of the prince: "Indignant son of the most virtuous mother!" he cried. "Perhaps he was killed or is dangerously injured! . . . Stay here, Pamrose," he continued, "don't return to this fatal room. Undoubtedly it is the heavens that saved you from criminal plots. However, this event has nothing supernatural about it. I will come back soon, and I will explain to you this strange adventure." While speaking in this manner, Herman was getting dressed, and leaving his daughter, he went to wake up his brother, William, and all the servants.

He declared publicly what had just happened. One could see William's anger and resentment. But in the end, Pamrose had had the good fortune of escaping this awful danger, and he wished—as did the others—to help Frédéric promptly. Pamrose's chamber had a trapdoor formed by a broad flap, laid flat on the floor, opening on one side by a hinge and held up on the other by iron rings. The room was situated over a vast shed that, instead of windows, had only arcades held up by pillars. The wind having gotten trapped in the shed had blown open the flap of the trapdoor whose rings, by chance, had not been well fastened, and it was at this moment that Frédéric, shoved back by Pamrose, fell into the room below hers. These types of trapdoors are commonly found in German cottages, and almost all of them sit above a shed like the one I just described.[30] Herman didn't have in his cottage any of these dangerous trapdoors; Pamrose was not familiar with them. She went at night for the first time into the room where Frédéric surprised her; she hastily went to bed, without examining the room. As

such, the occurrence of the trapdoor had for her all the appearance of a prodigy.

In the meantime, all the men from the cottage went with torches into the shed. They found Prince Frédéric passed out, with a broken arm. Upon regaining consciousness, his confusion was extreme; he appeared to feel even more the acute pain his arm was causing him. Horses were hitched to a *Stulhwaggon*, they brought the prince forth, and Herman took him back himself to the palace.[31]

The princess, informed about everything by Herman, gave herself up to the just affliction caused by her son's conduct and the punishment he would receive. However, he suffered only for four or five days; his arm recovered very well, and the severe pain ceased. Amélie had a long discussion with him. The prince, who felt that nothing cools the fires of love better than a broken arm, protested that he was cured of his passion and, in order to excuse himself, put all the blame on the Baron of Klakenberg, whose advice had led him astray. Amélie exhorted him to renounce this friendship, and the prince wrote right away to his *intimate friend* to never appear before him again. Quite satisfied that he had had the will to make this sacrifice (which cost him nothing at all), and triumph over a *passion*, which had only ever been a whim, he consoled himself about these disgraces, which procured him the opportunity to show so much magnanimity. And as he knew that *love forgives all*, and that an enterprising and *impetuous* young man is not displeasing to women, he appeared in public, with his arm in a sling, not only without shame but also with the gentle pride and interesting airs of a *wounded hero*.

Amélie, wanting to give homage to the character of her dear Pamrose, made her refusal to marry the Count of *** widely known. The ladies of the court, charmed to see beautiful Pamrose confined forever to a cottage, commended her effortlessly on this occasion. They didn't fail to exhaust, on this subject, all the clichés one could spout about the happiness of devoting oneself to the pastoral life, to love, to obscurity. They didn't believe a single word of it, but they flattered themselves that they were convinced. Everyone pretended to believe it, and for five or six days the conversations at the palace were less frivolous and less insipid than usual.

Pamrose married William, who came to live in the cottage. And whenever a traveler passed through Bingen, people would say: "If you want

to see a superb gallery, a beautiful *cabinet de médailles*,[32] a great English-style park? Go to the *palace*. But do you want to see the delicious image of pure and perfect felicity? Go to the *cottage* of the wise Herman."

1 From Félicité de Genlis, "Pamrose, ou Le palais et la chaumière," in *Nouveaux contes moraux et nouvelles historiques* (Paris: Maradan, 1806), 5:71–128.

2 *Note from 1806 edition*: From Berlin (5:71).

3 Interestingly, at several moments in the text the narrator switches from the use of past tense opening to the historical present tense, evident in the opening pages here. Switching to the historical present arguably produces the effect in readers that the action is occurring before our eyes, heightening the melodramatic nature of the action.

4 The narrator returns to past tense narration. This pattern will recur later in the text.

5 A postilion is "[a] person who rides the (leading) nearside (left-hand side) horse drawing a coach or carriage" (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

6 *Note from 1806 edition*: Everything that we just read, as noted in the forward, is not made up (5:75).

7 *Note from 1806 edition*: What is called in Germany "great mistress" [*grande maîtresse*] (5:77).

8 After considering what happens later in the tale, we realize that the princess's hope of this being a good omen unfortunately does not come true.

9 In the early modern period, noble and royal women typically did not nurse their own infants. Instead, wet nurses were hired. In the eighteenth century, there were many critics of this long-standing practice; Jean-Jacques Rousseau was an early proponent of women nursing their own children, a novel idea at the time. The use of wet nurses freed elite women to engage in intellectual pursuits and even allowed working-class women to provide further income and contribute financially to the household. See Badinter (91).

10 A reference to the thirteenth-century French king, Louis IX (1214–70).

11 The French is *dévote*, which could refer to someone who is religious, but it can also refer to a sanctimonious individual. Given the ironic tone of the passage, the sense here is "bigot." Genlis is critical of these negative opinions of Queen Blanche, whose apparent values are close to her own, and whom she praises in her second volume of *Les annales de la vertu* (1781).

12 A farthingale is a "frame-work of hoops, usually of whalebone, worked into some kind of cloth, formerly used for extending the skirts of women's dresses; a hooped petticoat" (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

13 *Note from 1806 edition*: One must create a new word in order to express something so new (5:81). *Editors' note*: Here, Genlis is creating a feminine version of the term *tacticien*, which is only found in masculine form in nineteenth-century French dictionaries. In this period, it has military and parliamentary connotations, domains that excluded women from participation.

14 Napoléon made attempts to reintegrate the *émigrés*—the nobles and members of the clergy who had fled France during the Revolution—into postrevolutionary society. An *émigré* herself, Genlis returned to Paris from Germany in 1800, and Napoléon obtained an apartment for her at the Arsenal; he also supported her with a pension beginning in 1804.

15 *Note from the serialized English edition*: It appears from this very *delicate* flattery, that though the authoress can satirise the practices of courts, she cannot entirely divest herself of the habits acquired in them (*Lady's Magazine*, September 1802, 470).

16 A province of Prussia, Silesia was integrated into the German Empire in 1871. It included parts of Poland and the Czech Republic.

17 A pendeloque is a "gem, *esp*. a diamond, cut in the shape of a drop and used as a pendant; a piece of jewelry of similar design" (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

18 A governor is in charge of the education of a prince. Quite unusually, Genlis served as "governor" of the children of the duc d'Orléans, a position usually reserved for a male noble.

19 Virgil's pastoral works were popular in the early modern period. Genlis had visited the Swiss poet and writer of idylls Salomon Gessner (1730–88) at his country home, which she had imagined would be, much like Herman's abode, "an elegant cottage surrounded by groves and flowers," where "one would only drink milk" (*Souvenirs de Félicie* 91). However, upon arriving she crossed through "a little garden filled only with carrots and cabbage" and found Gessner "smoking a pipe and drinking beer" (91). She nevertheless describes him as being "a big kind man one easily admires, with whom one discusses without pretention and whom one cannot see and know without liking him" (90).

20 In the French, Genlis alternates *c'est là* ("it is there") with *c'est ici* ("it is here"). The translation thus follows the pattern rendered by the alternation between "here" and "there."

21 Here, the French is *reposoir*, which refers to a specific altar used in religious processions. At one point in the procession, a priest halts and sets the eucharist on the temporary altar that is decorated with flowers.

22 In this period, dinner was eaten in the afternoon, and supper (*souper*, which comes from *soupe*, or "soup") was the lighter evening meal.

23 The exchange here is between the baroness and Amélie.

24 This moment recalls the ball scene in versions of "Cinderella," where all eyes are on the mysterious princess.

25 The French word used here is "commune," which refers to qualities of a "commoner" (as opposed to the nobility).

26 Genlis was well known for her disdain of the French *philosophes*, whom she sometimes referred to as "philo-sophists" (Robb 97). Voltaire and Diderot were among the most prominent of the *philosophes* in the eighteenth century.

27 Holstein peasants were known for standing up on the carriage as they steered the horses.

28 A trousseau chest, or hope chest, contains clothes and linen for a bride to take with her into her new home.

29 A prodigy can refer to an extraordinary thing or occurrence that can have the qualities of a miracle or a curse.

30 *Author's note*: The author of this story, also entering carelessly in one of these rooms, at the very instant that the wind blew open the poorly closed trap door, was on the verge of falling into the chasm.

31 Genlis uses the German word *Stulhwaggon* (or *Stulwagen*), a type of carriage to which so many seats or chairs were fastened.

32 A *cabinet de médailles* is a room or library where ancient and rare coins and medals are displayed in a royal palace or aristocratic home.

Julie Delafaye-Bréhier

Although much information about the life of Julie Nicolase Delafaye-Bréhier is yet to be discovered, most sources place her birth in Nantes (Loire-Atlantique), France on March 15, 1785, to bourgeois merchant parents, Jean Julien Marie Bréhier and Marie Jeanne Pichon. The young author was raised by her maternal uncle, Auguste Bréhier, a poet and the constitutional vicar of Dreffeac, to whom she dedicated her 1856 novel, *L'intérieur d'une famille, ou Le récit du voyageur* (The interior of a family, or The voyager's tale). During the Reign of Terror in 1793, Bréhier left Brittany in order to live with her mother's family in Saintonge, where she renounced Catholicism in favor of Protestantism. On April 10, 1812, Julie Bréhier married Gratien Claude Delafaye, a doctor who was also mayor and justice of the peace in Brossac as well as the municipal councilor for the Charente Department in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region. Although she never had children, she did have a beloved sister, Nancy, to whom her four-tome work, *Les soupers de famille, ou Nouveaux contes moraux, instructif et amusans pour les enfans* (1817), was dedicated and from which "L'histoire de la petite Clotilde" ("The Story of Little Clotilde") is taken.

Her first novel, *Les six nouvelles de l'enfance* (Six novellas of childhood) was published in 1812 under the name of Madame Delafaye-Bréhier. In the preface, describing herself as young and unknown, the author, in a self-abnegating gesture, claims to be too ignorant to instruct and therefore seeks only to please her adolescent audience; yet she admits to including a moral in her stories. Although her writing is often described as moral romance, or as similar to the style of the successful French children's author Arnaud Berquin, Delafaye-Bréhier's corpus includes fairy tales and other imaginative literature not typical of Berquin's oeuvre. Later in her writing, perhaps gaining self-confidence owing to the success of her works or perceiving it necessary to respond to critics about the didactic usefulness of the fairy tale, Delafaye-Bréhier defends her choice to instruct her young audience with morals embedded in marvelous tales. Publishing more than forty-five works, her writings earned her immense success during her

lifetime, especially in the middle of the century, and several of her novels and collections of tales were republished well after her death on April 2, 1849. *Les soupers de famille* was translated into English as *Family Suppers, or Evening Tales for Young People: In which Instruction Is Blended with Amusement* by Lady Mary H*** (possibly Hughes) and published by John Souter in 1818, only a year following its debut.

In the preface to *Les soupers de famille*, Delafaye-Bréhier defends the marvelous genre at large against critics of the period who believed that fairy tales spoiled children's judgment. In contrast to her contemporaries such as Marceline Desbordes-Valmore and George Sand who both reference the tales of Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy in their writings, Delafaye-Bréhier evokes only the tales of Charles Perrault, asserting that not only she but everyone from her generation enjoyed their innocent and fleeting pleasures as children. However, although her texts contain a didactic or moralizing tone, in contrast to Perrault's "isolated tales," Delafaye-Bréhier's fairy tales are embedded in complex frame narratives and therefore reflect the intricacies in many of the texts penned by the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century *conteuses*.

The first volume of Delafaye's *Les soupers de famille* opens with the arrival of the captain Pamphile at the castle of his older brother, the Count of Ildefonse. Each night's *souper* (supper) is followed by a different performance from one of the family members, including the count's children and grandchildren, which consist of everything from the recitation of poems to the sharing of short stories and at times the reading from a book containing marvelous narratives.[1] The tale for the thirteenth supper, "The Story of Little Clotilde," is read from a notebook by the captain Pamphile.

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1 The count has three children Théodore, Caroline, and Arsène, who are joined by their spouses and children. In the first volume, the count describes the characters of each of his six grandchildren, noting their shortcomings and where correction is necessary. Théodore has three children: Henri, the eldest, is reasonable and wise, although he is not yet fourteen years old; Gustave is already a little chevalier nicknamed Sans-Peur (without fear); and the youngest is nicknamed Galaor for his extreme frivolity and inconsistency. Caroline's four children are Juliette, who is the same age as Henri and who is described as a bit arrogant in spite of efforts to correct this character flaw; Victorine, who has a sweet disposition and a talent for drawing and music; Paulin, a born navigator who speaks of nothing but ships and explorations; and Louise who at barely six years old does not yet have a determined personality. Finally, Arsène, a widow, has only one child, a

daughter Elizabeth, who is eight years old and, as her mother was in her youth, is described as strong willed.

“The Story of Little Clotilde” (1817)

Translated by Adrion Dula[1]

Thirteenth Supper

Galaor had a great lightness of character, which prevented him from succeeding in anything, although he undertook many things. He began, however, to play the violin well enough, till he lost interest, and begged his father to give him a drawing tutor. Mr. Théodore was wealthy, but the education of his three sons compelled him to employ a great deal of his savings. He was seriously angry with Galaor, reproaching him for his lack of constancy.

“Do you ignore,” said he, “that no talent can be acquired without difficulty, and that it is only with perseverance that we can overcome the difficulties that they all present? Your thoughtlessness does you a considerable injury, not only in the arts of pleasure but also in serious studies, which are otherwise very useful. You studied successively Latin, Greek, English, and German, without knowing any of these languages, without even succeeding in possessing yours. Mathematics charmed you with great difficulty for a month. At the end of the day, you do not know anything, and age is gaining on you without a proportionate increase in understanding. However, if this continues, what will you do in the world? The ignorant only obtain contempt, because the world has regard only to those who are useful to it. My friend, it is time you decided on something. I cannot satisfy your many fantasies without injuring your brothers, who have the same rights as you to my inheritance and whose application corresponds much better to my sacrifices. Choose once and for all, for I warn you that this will be the last. I will leave you three days to think about it.”

“It’s not necessary to wait so long, father,” replied Galaor. “I assure you that I’m determined to learn drawing, and since you have the kindness to allow me a last choice—”

“No haste,” said Mr. Théodore. “I will not hear your definitive answer until after three days.”

Galaor went to tell his brother Henri what his father had promised him.

“What! You want to drop the violin, which you started playing so pleasantly?” Henri said to him. “I assure you that you’ll have a great deal of regret. Drawing is a charming thing, no doubt, but what sorrow must be taken to succeed! See how much Victorine works every day, though she is already advanced! You have overcome, with the violin, obstacles that should enliven this study.”

“No,” replied Galaor. “The violin bores me.”

The same day, Gustave and Galaor went to see Paulin. He was taking an astronomy lesson. This child showed such a great desire to travel on the sea that his father thought it expedient to have him instructed in the science so useful to navigators. The tutor, animated by the company, and desiring to give a high idea of his knowledge, began to speak of the most curious things taught by astronomy. The young men listened attentively to what he said to them about the mountains of the moon, which one sees very well with a telescope and which appear to the naked eye as simple spots similar to the sketch of a face. The clear and variable stripes lie on the surface of a planet called Jupiter, and the scientists suppose them to be very extensive seas. The ring of Saturn, a kind of large crown, thin and oval, which surrounds this planet without touching it and whose use cannot be guessed. The explanation of different revolutions of the earth and of the planets around the sun so enchanted Galaor that upon returning he dreamed of nothing but astronomy. Drawing lost all its charm, and Galaor promised Henri he would stick to this last choice and work to become a great astronomer.

The next day, Mrs. Théodore invited her sons to accompany her to a concert to which she was invited. Gustave, who loved only the music of the drums, obtained permission to remain home. Galaor and Henri left with their mother. After several brilliant orchestral pieces, a young man played a flute solo with so much superiority that all the spectators applauded him with joy, and Galaor stronger than all the others. Here he was as taken with the flute as he had been of astronomy, and it was decided on that day that he would ask for a flute tutor. When he was about to go and find his father, Henri took him aside and persuaded him to reflect carefully on what he was

going to do. He pointed out that in the short space of two days he had desired successively drawing, astronomy, and the flute.

“Is it probable,” added Henri, “that your taste will no longer vary and that you’ll definitely settle for the last talent that has charmed you? No, my brother, you mustn’t flatter yourself. Scarcely will you have left the violin than you’ll be repelled by the difficulties of the flute, and you’ll miss a study already full of pleasures. Believe me, resist a desire that is only just born. Force yourself to work seriously on what is most useful to you.”

Frontispiece from *Les soupers de famille, ou Nouveaux contes moraux, instructif et amusans pour les enfans*, vol. 3 (Paris: Alexis Emery, 1817).

Galaor found these observations just, though they somewhat annoyed him. He resolved to listen to them and follow them. Mr. Théodore praised him for the docility of which Galaor found himself afterward. The count and the captain confirmed it by their approval.

At the end of dessert, Pamphile drew from his pocket a little notebook on which was written the story that we are going to read.

The Story of Little Clotilde

A peasant woman from Roussillon, named Olive, had three daughters, the eldest of whom had just turned thirteen, and the youngest, eight. Onésime, Monique, and Clotilde were their names. An accident had rendered the youngest lame, and her mother was rather unjust for loving her less than the others. Olive sent her to the fields regardless of the weather, to watch over a flock of geese, though she was younger and weaker than her sisters. A piece of dry bread and a clove of garlic were all the food she was given, while Onésime and Monique enjoyed their meal at home. Clotilde was still obliged to spin a certain amount of tow, which her mother gave her before she left. Sweet and timid, she suffered all without complaining and thought only of fulfilling exactly the task imposed upon her in order to gain the affection of her mother. One day, when it was very cold, her numb little fingers refused to turn her spindle, and Clotilde began to cry. An old woman approached her and asked her the cause of her tears.

“Alas!” Clotilde replied. “I cannot spin, my fingers are so numbed by the cold, and my mother will hate me still more.”

“Poor child!” said the good old woman. “Your mother is therefore very unjust?”

“She is not unjust,” replied Clotilde. “And since I displease her, it must be my fault.”

The old woman, moved by this reply, embraced Clotilde, took her distaff, and began to spin the work of a whole day in a moment. Clotilde, grateful for this service, wished to share her bread with the old woman. The woman drew from a little basket she had on her arm an excellent plum pie, to which she treated the young girl. When the old woman was gone, Clotilde put her

ball of thread in her apron and brought her geese home. Olive asked her sternly to see the work of the day. Clotilde opened her little apron, but scarcely had her mother cast her eyes on it, when she exclaimed: “What do I see? Gold thread! What does this mean?”

Clotilde, quite dumbfounded, recounted what had happened to her without being able to understand how her thread of tow had turned into gold. Olive, very much satisfied with this change, the cause of which she did not know, treated Clotilde a little better that evening, and the poor little girl wept with joy. The next day the old woman came again to find Clotilde, who spoke to her of the strange metamorphosis of her ball of thread.

“My dear girl,” said the old woman, “heaven always blesses children who respect their parents. He[2] was touched by the efforts you made to win your mother’s affection.”

From “La petite Clotilde,” in *Les Soupers de famille, ou Nouveaux contes moraux, instructif et amusans pour les enfans*, vol. 3 (Paris: Alexis Emery, 1817).

She again helped Clotilde to spin her tow, and in the evening the spindles were still covered with gold thread, a metamorphosis that continued the following days. In the joy that this adventure brought to Olive, who discovered a source of wealth, she reproached herself for her aversion to Clotilde and began to love her more than she had cherished the others. From that moment on, the best clothes and the best dishes were destined for her. Clotilde felt much less affected by these presents than by the affection

of her mother, and she would have been very happy without the jealousy of her sisters, who saw not without sorrow the change that had just occurred.

Onésime said to her mother: “I beg you to give me some fine hemp and send me to keep the geese in place of Clotilde so that I may also bring you gold thread.”

Onésime waited in vain for the old woman to appear. She was obliged to do her work alone, and in the evening her spindles were covered only with hemp. In her vexation, she threw them on the ground and went to hide. Monique told her that she should have taken large tow like the ones Clotilde was spinning, and having loaded her distaff, she went off to the fields in turn without being happier than her sister. Nothing could equal the spite of these two young girls. Monique, her anger pushed to the breaking point, asked her sister whether she would have any qualms in taking revenge on Clotilde. Onésime replied that considering the matter properly, Clotilde had not offended them and that she was not the cause of all that was going on.

“How good you are to think so!” cried Monique. “Can you believe in the tales that this little girl tells us? There is no doubt that someone gives her this golden thread, and she pretends not to know where it comes from.”

“But,” resumed Onésime, “Clotilde is so simple!”

“So simple,” retorted Monique, “you like to say! With all her simplicity she has nevertheless managed to seize our mother’s affections. We are no longer considered, we are no longer bought new clothes, and I bet that before long she will be given ours.”

“Monique, I have an idea. Let’s try to follow her to the fields and surprise her. We’ll know how she transforms her tow into gold.”

This solution pleased Monique. The next day, the two sisters slipped out of the house and went to lie in ambush in a bush near the tree beneath which Clotilde was gaily spinning away. All she had left was a couple of threads when the old woman appeared. She embraced Clotilde, sat beside her, and finished spinning what remained. Clotilde having taken the path to the house, Monique said to Onésime: “Let’s seize her ball of thread. We’ll threaten her to keep her secret, and we will persuade our mother that we have done the work of Clotilde.”

However poorly this plot was hatched, Onésime gladly gave into it. They stopped their younger sister.

“You have deprived us of our mother’s affections,” they said, “thanks to the infernal tricks of your accursed old woman. Now you must promise not to contradict us, for we want to take your threads and make them pass for our work. If you talk, we’ll beat you.”

“Hey! My sisters,” replied Clotilde, “why threaten me so? Is it not enough for you to be pleased by it, that I may consent with all my heart?”

So she gave the threads, which had already become gold, to her sister Onésime, and all three approached Olive. Clotilde stood behind as Onésime advanced with a triumphant air.

“My mother,” she said, “I hope you will not blame me for what I have done today. The desire to please you has induced me to take the place of Clotilde, and I also bring you threads of gold.”

Upon saying this, she opened her apron . . . but, oh sorrow! The threads had transformed back into tow. Olive gave her a smack, and Onésime went to bed crying. Clotilde, questioned by her mother, was obliged to confess the truth to her, which she did while excusing her sisters as best as she could.

Onésime and Monique, more irritated than before, formed the unworthy plan to get rid of Clotilde. On the following Sunday, they took her out for a walk by the sea, in a place where there was a small boat attached to a stake with a wicker loop. The three sisters began to play in the boat. Onésime, taking advantage of a moment when Clotilde was alone, quickly removed the stake loop while Monique pushed the boat with her foot. The water current had soon distanced it from the shore. Then the two sisters, little touched by Clotilde’s tears, cried out: “Good-bye, beautiful spinner, we wish you a good journey.” And they quickly fled. Yet they had not taken three hundred paces when they shuddered at the act they had just committed.

“If our sister should perish, we’ll be the cause of it!” they cried out, weeping. They returned to the shore and discovered in the distance the little boat that the waves seemed to be almost swallowing, although the sea was very calm. At this sight, their tears and cries doubled, and they began to accuse each other of their common crime. One of their neighbors found them thus in pain. He thought that this frightful event was the result of ordinary imprudence of youth, and he brought the two sisters home to their

mother, with whom he shared his opinion, an error which Onésime and Monique took care not to spoil.

We have already seen how self-serving Olive was. The loss of her daughter Clotilde, leading to that of the golden thread, rendered the mother inconsolable, to the point that she died of grief at the end of a fortnight. One of her brothers, who had become the guardian of her two daughters, treated them with a harshness that often reminded them of the loss of Clotilde.

“God punishes us for the evil we have done to her,” Onésime would cry. “We tried to be better, and we are to be more pitied than ever. Without your bad advice, this evil would not have happened to us.”

“It’s your example that has ruined me,” Monique would respond bitterly. “You are the eldest; was it not your responsibility to reprimand me when I was wrong?”

They thus passed the days in continual reproaches and doubled their pains instead of alleviating them. Let them bear this just punishment for their barbarity, and let us return to Clotilde, whom we saw in danger in a small boat in the middle of the sea.

After having meandered all night, the poor child, filled with terror and weary of shedding tears, commended herself to God with all her heart, when she perceived, at daybreak, an island of greenery on the bank of which the boat stopped. Clotilde was timidly going ashore when a crowd of young girls about her age, a crown of flowers on their heads and dressed in fine clothes, came out of the groves, singing and dancing. One of them, approaching the little traveler, embraced her tenderly, and said: “Welcome, Clotilde. We have been waiting for you a long time.”

Clotilde was astonished to hear these words, but not knowing how to answer them, she remained silent. A young girl presented her with a dress and a crown similar to theirs, and several of them helped her dress herself. Then the young girl who had spoken to her, taking her by the hand, led her into the interior of the island. A vast palace of white marble, built in the style of a rotunda and surrounded by columns, stood between the trees. All around the palace there were orchards full of fruit trees so low that the tallest did not reach three feet. Peaches, plums, pears, oranges, apples, and fruits of all kinds offered themselves to the childish hand of the young inhabitants of the island. Several ate to refresh themselves, and Clotilde, solicited by her companions, also ate, for she was in great need of it. But

before she could pluck it, she asked if anyone would blame her for taking such a liberty. The young girls answered that all that was on the island belonged to them and that all who entered it had the same right as they did. Clotilde, who desired an explanation, begged the girl accompanying her to give it to her. The latter, named Egeria, hastened to satisfy her.

“You are on the Island of Happy Children,” she said to Clotilde. “It belongs to the fairy Sensible,[3] whom we all look upon as our mother and who often dwells among us. This good fairy, while traveling the earth, has been touched by the fate of many unhappy children whom she has seen there, some orphans, others abandoned at birth, others still unjustly hated or victims of the misery of their family. The fairy, taking under her protection these unfortunate young people, has populated this peaceful island, where an eternal spring reigns. She has assembled here all that pleases our age, demanding of us nothing but harmony and sincerity. We don’t know what it is to study with difficulty. We take instruction in only that which may please us, and provided we are gentle and forgiving to one another, she asks nothing more.”

At this moment, the sound of various instruments was heard. Egeria told Clotilde that this music announced mealtime, and they entered the palace together.

In the middle of an immense round room, adorned with pink wall coverings, shaded with white, and embellished with garlands of flowers, there was a table of the same shape as the room and proportioned to its size. A happy blend of flowers, fruits, vegetables, jams, and sweets of all kinds charmed at once sight, smell, and taste. All the girls embraced one another before sitting at the table and sang a hymn in which they thanked God for their felicity and prayed to him to protect their sovereign. They repeated this touching ceremony after the meal. Egeria, taking Clotilde under her arm, led her into the other rooms of the palace. Above the dining room, there was another of the same size, destined for dancing. All around were statues of musicians with their various instruments. These statues became animated at will, and got the girls dancing as soon as the latter had the fancy. Above this room were four others: the first contained all the books appropriate to entertain youth. The second, held a multitude of musical instruments, which played of their own accord as soon as they had been touched. The third room contained magnificent dolls, fabrics to dress them,

furniture for their use, and all the games suitable for young girls. Finally, the fourth was that of sweets, where dry and liquid jams, fine sugar-coated almonds, delicate pastries, and a thousand little desserts so agreeable to children were found. Clotilde and Egeria sat down on a pile of pralines and took a moment’s rest in this delightful salon.

They then went up to a terrace at the height of the palace, from where they could see the whole island and the sea surrounding it. Clotilde noticed in the distance a little black spot. Egeria told her that it was an island similar to theirs, where the fairy had gathered young boys—but soon turning her eyes to their own dwelling, she showed Clotilde how pleasant it was. The whole ground was covered with fine grass, which everywhere formed a soft carpet on which one could fall twenty times without risk. The numerous streams with which it was watered were not more than a foot deep and flowed on a very fine sand. In all the corners of the grove, there were small swings, a ring game[4] proportioned to the strength of the inhabitants of the island, and small chariots drawn by sheep, who also let themselves be mounted and led like horses. The birds made their nests on the ground or in the small trees of the orchards, receiving with pleasure the caresses and care of the young girls who never hurt them. When night came, and a sweet sleep weighed down the eyes of these fortunate children, they went into the midst of a very dark wood. At the same instant, cradles of moss and flowers, hanging from the trees by garlands, lowered themselves to the ground. Each of the girls took her usual place, the cradles rose slowly, and a fresh breeze spreading through the woods helped lull the young girls to sleep, swinging them softly in their aerial beds.

Clotilde, delighted at all these things, only wished to see the fairy Sensible, to thank her for the good things she was going to enjoy.

“You know her,” said Egeria. “She often spoke to us of you.”

Clotilde thought long and hard, but she did not remember having seen anything like a fairy, according to the idea she had of one. As Egeria could not tell her more, it was necessary to wait until the fairy came herself to clear up this mystery. It was nearly a month that Clotilde was living on the island, when one morning harmonious music was heard. All the young girls shouted with joy and rushed to the shore: it was the fairy Sensible. A little mother-of-pearl vessel with muslin sails embroidered in gold was approaching the island to the sound of ravishing music. An ivory bridge

assisted the fairy's descent. She was still young and beautiful, with a soft and caressing countenance. A diadem[5] of pearls adorned her forehead. She soon found herself surrounded by her numerous family. Some of them kissed her silvery dress, others seized her hands, all wept with joy looking upon her. They brought her a little chariot, which had the form and color of a roseleaf. More than fifty girls attached their belts to it, and drew it lightly toward the palace, while a host of others, who could not find a place elsewhere, rushed about the wheels.

When this initial excitement calmed a bit and the fairy was able to be heard, she asked for the newcomer. Clotilde embraced her knees with a timid and tender air. The fairy gave her a kiss and told her that she was the old woman who had helped her so often to spin her distaff. Clotilde had never stopped at this idea, although she had come to it several times. The old woman seemed so different from what she supposed a fairy must be. She again expressed her gratitude to Sensible. The fairy also told her about her mother's death and the punishment her sisters received for having tried to bring about her downfall. These two pieces of news brought Clotilde a great deal of grief, and she withdrew from the joy of her companions and went to weep over the misfortunes of her family. The death of her mother was irreparable, but she could not lose hope that the fairy would soften the sad condition of her sisters. After a few days, she ventured to express her wishes in this respect.

"My child," replied the fairy, "I can only praise a desire so worthy of the goodness of your heart. Yet I must warn you that misfortune has not changed Onésime and Monique at all. They are still envious and wicked. Sincere repentance has not entered their souls, and as it is impossible for a vicious heart to taste happiness, no matter what is done for them, they will be pitiful all their lives."

Clotilde withdrew, not daring to insist more, but she could not persuade herself of such sad truths and gave herself up to melancholy. Sensible soon perceived that she was fleeing the games and pleasures of her companions. Touched with compassion, she called Clotilde.

"You are sad, my daughter," she said, "and my words have not persuaded you. The motive that leads you to doubt it is too laudable for me to be offended. Tell me what you wish. Remember, however, that I cannot admit your sisters onto my island, nor consent to you remaining with them."

“Alas!” said Clotilde, “at least allow me to comfort them by telling them that the evil they intended to do me has become a source of happiness for me, and provide me with something I can give as a present to my uncle so that he treats them more gently.”

The fairy granted her all that she desired. Clotilde received from her hands a belt, which when tied around her body was all that was necessary for her to be carried wherever she wanted, and a purse of mermaid[6] skin filled with gold for the tutor.

“This purse,” says the fairy, “never becomes empty, no matter what use be made of it, unless the one to whom it belongs commits an injustice. Then there is nothing left in it, and it only fills again after a prompt reparation. With this, your sisters will have nothing more to fear from their guardian who will find it too advantageous to behave well to neglect doing so.”

Clotilde thanked the fairy tenderly. Delighted at being able to change the fate of her sisters, she put on her belt and soon arrived in Roussillon. After having tightened her belt in her bosom, she advanced toward two impoverished and poorly dressed girls, whom she saw seated in the corner of a wood. It was Onésime and Monique. They were quarreling, as usual, when Clotilde came and threw her arms around their necks. Her sisters could not believe it was her, seeing her so richly dressed.

“My dear friends,” said Clotilde, “no longer have any regrets because of me. I’ve become so happy that I’ve lost the right to address you the slightest reproach. But as soon as I knew of your misfortune, I couldn’t enjoy my felicity and I come to console you in your sorrows.”

Onésime and Monique began to cry, asking for forgiveness and complaining bitterly about the conduct of their guardian. Clotilde, after having shown them great affliction about the death of her mother, told them all that had happened to her since their separation. Her sisters begged her to take them with her to the Island of Happy Children and seemed very mortified to learn that the fairy was opposed to it.

The return of Clotilde brought great pleasure to all the neighborhood, who loved her because of her gentleness and kindness. The guardian received with joy the present of the purse and behaved in such a manner that it was always filled. He began, then, to have his two nieces properly dressed and to manage their inheritance with scrupulous probity. Onésime and Monique soon felt such a favorable change, but instead of becoming

better, they hated Clotilde because of the extraordinary happiness she enjoyed.

“It’s out of jealousy,” said Monique, “that she refuses to take us to her island, and she endeavors to persuade us that the fairy opposes it.”

“I think as you do,” replied Onésime. “We should steal her belt and force her to stay here in our place.”

Adopting this plan, they tied their sister to a tree, took off her belt, and each having taken one end in hand, they flew away at once, mocking poor Clotilde.

“The fairy was right,” said the girl, sighing, “and I should have believed her.”

A peasant, who came passing by, broke her bonds. Clotilde returned to her uncle, who had no need of the purse to conduct himself well with her whose amiable character compelled everyone to love her. Her sisters were not missed by anyone, and the guardian thanked God for delivering him from these two evil creatures.

However, Clotilde, after having enjoyed the delights of the island, could no longer find herself happy anywhere else. The memories of the pleasures she had lost continually pursued her and overwhelmed her with grief. One day, when she was wandering sadly by the sea, she saw a swallow holding something bright in her beak, then placing it on the shore. Clotilde went to see what it was. She recognized her belt. Delighted at having recovered this treasure, she hastened to fasten it around her and was carried away immediately to the Island of Happy Children.

Scarcely had she received the compliments of her companions than she inquired what had become of her sisters. Egeria told her that the belt had led them to the edge of the island, but having encountered an invisible wall that prevented them from entering, they struggled for some time with effort and eventually fell into the sea, where two enormous fish who had been watching devoured them at once. The belt was taken by the swallow who had brought it to Clotilde. The young girl pitied her sisters in spite of their wickedness. She went to pay homage to the fairy Sensible, who caressed her. Her arrival was a day of celebration for her companions who wished to prove their friendship to her by the excess of their joy.

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“Ah! My dear uncle!” exclaimed Louise, “that I am not in this beautiful palace where one sits down on heaps of pralines!”[7]

“And where they never study,” added Galaor. “I am very glad that my uncle agrees that it’s one of the misfortunes of our age and that we should be much happier if we weren’t obliged to do so.”

“It is not I who agree,” replied Pamphile, “it is this big book. In this respect, however, I will admit all that you please, and I will say that it is unfortunate to take the trouble to learn before we appreciate its usefulness. This is what happens at your age, and that is why what is most advantageous to you afterward often wrests from you many tears. You have often been told that there is a period in which memory becomes reactive, in which the mind accustomed to idleness no longer responds to the efforts demanded of it. If the first years of life are not used effectively, the rest is not to be counted on.”

Upon becoming convinced of these reasons, the children ceased to find themselves so much to be pitied. It must be remembered, moreover, that the author of this tale speaks of very young children and placed in an extraordinary situation. A fairy tale is inconsequential because of the illusions with which it is filled.

1 From Julie Delafaye-Bréhier, “L’histoire de la petite Clotilde,” in *Les soupers de famille, ou Nouveaux contes moraux, instructif et amusans pour les enfans* (Paris: Alexis Emery, 1817), 3:67–115.

2 *Il* in the original French refers back to *le ciel* (“heaven”) in the preceding sentence. Therefore, *Il* (“he”) may be read as referring indirectly God.

3 *Sensible*, although spelled the same as the English word, means “sensitive.”

4 *Jeu de bague* was a competition that began as a quite violent event in which cavaliers rode on horseback and attempted to put a lance into a small ring. It eventually became a less violent, chivalric game and a court favorite in the early modern period, especially in the eighteenth century. It is also a precursor to the modern carousel, as the game, during the reign of Louis XV, was played with rings hanging in a circle. It was primarily a game for adults until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when children began to play. The real horses were ultimately replaced by wooden ones, and the rings were eliminated.

5 A small crown or coronet, similar to a tiara, yet worn across the forehead rather than on top of the head.

6 The original French is *syrène*, an outdated spelling of *sirène*.

7 Louise’s outburst marks the end of “The Story of Little Clotilde.”

Félicité de Choiseul-Meuse

For Beth Glessner, Félicité de Choiseul-Meuse (1767–1838) was "[b]y far the most daring author to write during the early stages of female erotic literature" (131). Although the government of Napoléon Bonaparte financially supported Choiseul-Meuse's writing during the First Empire, Glessner remarks that "[t]hree of her works, *Julie ou j'ai sauvé ma rose* (1807), *Amélie de Saint Far, ou la fatale errer* (1808), and *Entre chien et loup* (1808) . . . were censored during the French Restoration and placed in the Bibliothèque Nationale in the protective area for forbidden books known as the *Enfer* [or Hell]" (131).[1] She was particularly prolific between 1797 and 1824, publishing over twenty-seven works, including novels, collections of novellas, and fairy tales, at an average pace of a work a year (132).[2] The publisher and bookseller Alexandre-Nicolas Pigoreau ranks her among the top ten most popular women writers in the period, with Félicité de Genlis at number one, and among the top twenty writers—male or female—in Restoration Paris (Cohen 26, 28).

According to one of her descendants, Jean Paillot, Félicité was the granddaughter of Maximilien Jean de Choiseul-Meuse, whose illustrious uncle was the duc de Choiseul, minister under Louis XV. Although her grandfather emigrated during the French Revolution, Félicité remained in France where she met Joseph-Louis Pâris de Treffonds, who would be the only known father of one of her three children; they never married.[3] Paillot also notes that Félicité collaborated on the *Journal des femmes: gymnase littéraire* (Women's Journal: a Literary School) with, among others, Marceline Desbordes-Valmore, publishing a piece, "Of the Wit of Women," in one of its earliest issues (September 1832).

Choiseul-Meuse's tale, "Rose and Black," appeared in her 1818 collection, *The Return of the Fairies*. The tale draws on Cinderella tropes—Rose is magically born with beautiful wooden clogs on her dainty feet—with a bit of irony, which the substitution of clogs for glass slippers would suggest. Just as Genlis does in "Pamrose," Choiseul-Meuse privileges the cottage over the palace in "Rose and Black," and both authors problematize

the Cinderella rags-to-riches narrative of marrying a prince, who is far from charming in both stories; Choiseul-Meuse even names him “Prince Terrible.” Choiseul-Meuse adds a further twist to her tale by integrating the question of race, for Rose is “cursed” to be Black every other day. In some respects, Choiseul-Meuse’s tale plays on the Kind and Unkind Girls narrative in which a kind girl is mistreated and whose virtue is rewarded through a trial of her virtue, while a selfish girl fails the test, which reveals her selfishness and lack of virtue, leading to her punishment. Choiseul-Meuse recasts the gender of the characters, for it is the virtue of Prince Terrible and of the peasant Mirto that is measured by their treatment of Rose and Black, who notably doesn’t have any sisters—kind or unkind—in this Cinderella-like tale. Prince Terrible threatens to kill the heroine when she is Black, but loves her when she is rose, foregrounding his hypocrisy, whereas Mirto loves her equally as Rose or Black, demonstrating his moral superiority. Of course, the racial prejudices underlying this test of male virtue are indeed most problematically racist: Blackness is associated with ugliness and social and amorous undesirability. At the same time, however, Blackness does not connote moral or intellectual inferiority. Moreover, the tale reaffirms class divisions by having the heroine happily marry the peasant, at the same time that female agency is asserted in her negotiation of her marriage to him.

1 On the support for Choiseul-Meuse’s work under Napoléon, see the work of Carla Hesse, who cites a document from the Archives Nationales in which the author thanks the minister of the interior in 1810 (51).

2 On the licentious nature of Choiseul-Meuse’s novels, see Kathryn Norberg’s “Making Sex Public.”

3 Jean Paillot provided me with the genealogy he prepared, “Histoire des Marestaing et des Pâris de Treffonds.” References to Félicité and her relationship to Pâris de Treffonds appear on pp. 38 and 41–43. I thank Monsieur Paillot for his generosity.

“Rose and Black” (1818)

Translated by Anne E. Duggan[1]

Once upon a time there was a poor woodcutter, impoverished despite the fact that he had worked hard and struggled. He had to provide for a wife and three grown boys, and his work brought in so little that it’s not even worth mentioning. He couldn’t imagine that his destiny would change when he was fortunate enough to save the life of the master who employed him and whom robbers had attacked in the forest.

Through an even rarer good fortune, it so happened that this master was not ungrateful. When his master recovered a bit from his scare, he told the woodcutter to come find him the next day and he would reward him. The woodcutter didn’t fail to come, believing that it was a matter of giving him a crown or two. Since it had seemed to him so simple to defend an unarmed man in the hands of two scoundrels, he attached such a small price to his good action, not giving any importance to the danger to which he exposed himself. This poor woodcutter was such an honest and humble man that he was mortified to think that someone would give him money for having done his duty. His wife, even more disinterested, was of the opinion that he shouldn’t receive anything, and they had a few disagreements between them on this subject, which is difficult to believe, perhaps, if one didn’t realize that these good people never went to the city and had lived in the woods since childhood.[2]

In any case, the woodcutter, not able to refuse the orders of his lord, put on his nicest clothes and got all cleaned up. He bowed more than a thousand times to the lackeys, the porter, and the servants before being presented to the master, who was waiting for him and who was, as is customary, much less arrogant than his valets. As soon as he saw the woodcutter appear, the lord compelled him to enter the room and sit down. “Well, Thomas!” he said. “How can I show my gratitude for what you did for me yesterday. I didn’t know that you were so skillful and brave. Without you, I would have

been done for. And as I very much like to live, I want you to be happy with me in return."

Poor Thomas was too confounded to respond; he continued to bow to his lord, stammering the words, "My Lord . . . your bounty . . . your grace . . ." such that his master saw he was in no state to make any requests.

To put him at ease, the lord continued: "I know better than you what suits you. First, I don't want to take you out of the station into which you were born, for I believe that you would not be any the happier for it. But I will give you and your children the cottage in which you presently live at the opening of the forest. You will cut as much wood as you can use each year; you will work for your own benefit, as it pleases you, and if your children want to hunt in the woods, all the game they kill will be for you. I demand only that you not sell anything, and that in living in such ease, you will not emerge from your happy obscurity."

Thomas was so surprised by all he was hearing that he didn't know how to express his gratitude. He ran to find his wife, who shared in his joy but in whom this beginning of good fortune stirred up the first ideas of ambition that she had ever conceived. The boys went to gather wood; they made a blazing fire. But when they were all warmed up, Mother Thomas began to say that it was nevertheless a shame that they couldn't do anything with all the wood they wouldn't be burning.

"An idea occurs to me," her husband responded. "Our master gives us all the wood that I can use . . . these are his own words. Very well! I will use so much of it that we will make for ourselves, God willing, a nice revenue from my work."

"How is that?" said his wife.

"When I was young," he added, "my father had shown me how to make wooden clogs, and I used to make them so light and so nice that they were praised everywhere."

"What would prevent me from taking up this work up again? Jacques will go fetch the wood in the forest; Pierre will go hunting and kill some game for our dinner; and Paul, who isn't the least shrewd of the three, will go sell my clogs in the neighboring town. This will even allow us to dress these poor boys more properly and to furnish a bit our cottage, which we will make into a little palace."

The children, who were present, decidedly relished this opinion. Everyone set out to work, and Mother Thomas, who was somewhat fond of her food, would so wonderfully fix up the game that Pierre would bring home. A bit of work, a warm fire, a good meal, and a lot of family unity made them the happiest people in the world. Their lord would come visit them, and seeing them so united and industrious, he would encourage their little clog business, which raised their well-being without exposing them to the vices born of luxury and cupidity.

But so much happiness didn't last long. A pack of enraged wolves spread throughout the forest; not a day would go by that they didn't devour children and travelers. In their fury, they would uproot trees and attack one another, and their howls could be heard day and night as far as the woodcutter's cottage. Mother Thomas didn't want to let her children go out, and when they would wander off, despite her forbidding it, she would remain at the door in mortal anguish, not being able to drink or eat until all three returned.

The woodcutter and his family didn't know what to do when the woodcutter's sons, who were most brave, decided in agreement with their father, to deliver their master from this terrible calamity. They took up arms, determined to defend themselves to the death if they were attacked, but with the intention of setting traps for the wolves in such a way as to destroy them without getting close to them. They dug deep pits and covered them with a bit of soil held up by some branches and foliage, and during all this work, which lasted several days, they would make bonfires around them to prevent the ferocious animals from approaching.

Their expectations met with success, for upon returning to the same place the next day at daybreak, they noticed that one of the pits had been disturbed during the night and that it was entirely uncovered. They loaded their muskets and were fighting over the honor of being the first to fire when they heard a soft and gentle imploring voice beseeching their help.

"What are we going to do?" said Pierre. "Clearly, these are not the howlings of a wolf. What if this is some unfortunate lost child fallen into the pit that we dug yesterday . . ."

They approached, and although they had difficulty distinguishing things, they realized it was a beautiful lady, richly dressed. She wore a headdress of diamonds that shone like a star. She appeared young and pretty. But as it

had rained during the night, her dress, which was of gold gauze, was swimming in water and mud. Her beautiful hands were all filthy, and she seemed even more upset about this misfortune than worried about the danger she could be risking. She continued, nevertheless, to struggle and signal to them to take her out, when three wolves of an enormous size, made their way toward them.

They looked at each other expressively, like people who sensed exactly what the risk was but who wouldn’t hesitate to carry out their duty. They had brought rope with them, and one of them wrapped the rope around his body and let himself be lowered into the pit. He placed the beautiful lady upon his shoulders while his brothers helped pull both of them up. They laid her out on the grass, for she had fallen unconscious. Meanwhile, the cruel animals were approaching, and the woodcutter’s sons were preparing to fight them when they realized that what they had taken to be wolves were three little lambs as white as snow; they came leaping all around them and licked the dress of the beautiful lady, who immediately regained her wits.

“My children,” she said to the woodcutter’s sons, “have no fear. See here the most dangerous animals you will find from now on in this forest. But I owe you an even greater reward. Take me to your father’s house. I want him to rejoice in having such brave and valiant sons as you.” These poor boys were so amazed by such an adventure that they didn’t respond at all; but they respectfully held the bottom of her dress, which had regained all its brilliance.

The little lambs were following them, leaping and frolicking about; sometimes they would go ahead, as if they knew the way. And Mother Thomas, who was waiting for her children, was not mildly surprised to see them arriving with such a retinue and such a charming and well-dressed lady—she had never seen anything like it. However, she asked the lady politely to come inside and freshen up, quite ashamed of not being able to offer her anything but a straw chair upon which to sit and fresh water, which was in a big very clean pitcher near the fireplace.

“I will take rest quite willingly in your home,” said the beautiful lady. “Although you see me for the first time, I am one of your friends, and I will give you proof of it. I will accept a glass of water on the condition that your children and your husband drink to my health.” A glance from the woodcutter’s wife alerted her sons to what they had to do. They each went

to seek their cup, which was merely of wood, and drew water straight from the pitcher. But what was their astonishment when they saw, upon drawing back their cup, that they were holding in their hands a beautiful silver goblet, and with respect to the water, it was such a delicious liqueur that when the woodcutter and his wife had drunk some of it, they felt themselves grow ten years younger.

They threw themselves at the feet of the beautiful lady with a bit of fear, for their natural instinct made them sense that with great power there is always a little to fear, even when that power is employed for the sake of good deeds. The lady kindly had them rise, however, and after informing them about the courageous conduct of their children, who had exposed themselves to the fury of wolves rather than taking flight and abandoning her, she told them that her name was the *fairy Coquette* and that she would willingly tell them her story.

“Before beginning your story,” said the woodcutter, “would you be so kind as to tell me what a fairy is? For thirty years I have been living in these woods, I sometimes hear about the devil, werewolves, and the Beast of Gevaudan, but I never knew that there was any such thing as fairies.”[3]

“There are, however, fairies,” responded Coquette, “but in truth they are not found in every age and in every country. They are supernatural beings to whom the gods granted a part of their power; they use this power to do good or harm, according to their character. It is in this way only that they resemble humans.”

The woodcutter, who was a very simple man, didn’t grasp much of this response; but like many others, he had a lot of respect for what he didn’t understand. He therefore took his hat off to her, bowing all the way down to the ground, and begged her simply to help him understand how a supernatural being could have fallen into a trap set for wolves.

“It is,” said Coquette, “because I have an enemy more powerful than myself, the enchanter *Barabapatapouf*.[4] He is the meanest man there is on earth; he has only three teeth, three strands of hair, and one eye and is fifteen feet tall. With all these charming features, he got it into his head to fall in love with me. I pretended to listen to him in order to mock him. When he had asked all his friends to his wedding, I used them as witnesses that such a monster could not appeal to me, and I sent them all away. Barabapatapouf was so greatly angered that he swore to cause me all the

pain that was in his power. He doesn’t have enough power to take my life, but he plays a hundred mean tricks on me, and I would have perhaps remained three days in that nasty hole if your brave children had not so generously pulled me out.”

“They did their duty,” replied the woodcutter.

“I will also do mine,” added Coquette. “My power has limits. I can grant two of your wishes, but it is essential that each of you remain perfectly free and do not consult each other; separate yourselves, and tomorrow, when you get up, you will come to tell me what you resolved to do during the night.”

The woodcutter’s wife was very worried about how she would accommodate the fairy for sleeping, for her children’s beds and even her own were not worthy of being offered to her, but the fairy told them not to worry about it for she had brought all that was necessary. It was a few grains of sand that she scattered on the floor. Suddenly three feet of rose leaves arose right from the spot where she was standing; the bolster was made of violets, pansies, and orange flowers, whose perfume was delightful, and the quilt, made entirely of butterfly wings, had such varied and lively colors that one would not tire from gazing upon it. The three lambs who had followed the fairy slept at her feet, and since the room was a bit dank, she warmed it up gently with their breath, with an intelligent and attentive air one cannot express. The woodcutter and his sons were so surprised by all these marvels that they were dumbstruck and thought they were dreaming. Coquette warned Mother Thomas that if she were to speak to her husband before seeing her again, the promise she made to grant one of their wishes would no longer be able to come true. Nothing less than such a warning was needed to give them the force not to consult each other in an affair that was of such interest to them. At daybreak, Coquette called them.

The woodcutter was the first to arrive and said to the fairy, with his typical geniality, that he had never thought it would be so difficult to make a wish. He had believed himself to be quite happy up to this point; however, ever since he was able to acquire one thing, he now desired a thousand. By dint of thinking about it and racking his brain, he had fallen asleep without deciding anything. But he had seen in his dream five purses full of gold. It

had seemed to him that there was one for his wife, one for himself, and the three others for his children.

“Well now!” said Coquette, “if I can satisfy you at this price, go look in the bin where you put the bread, and you will find the five purses that you saw in your dream. Simply tell me how many louis they should contain.”[5]

“Oh! If there were only one hundred louis in each one,” replied the good fellow, “there would be enough to expand our little business and send our clogs all the way to China.”

“Your wish is already granted,” said the fairy. “Go out this way and may your wife explain in turn her intentions.”

Like her husband, the woodcutter’s wife had not slept. She had never been so agitated or so unhappy in her life. Sometimes she wished for riches, and then she thought that riches didn’t prevent one from dying, and she wished that her husband, whom she loved very much, would live at least a hundred years. Then she wished one thing, and then another. It seemed to her that the fairy should have given her a month to reflect on this. She was, however, going to make up her mind to ask for money, when she had the idea that her husband undoubtedly had the same idea; and suddenly making her decision, she said to the fairy: “Madame fairy, I am quite old, and I don’t know if you will be able to satisfy my wish. But what I desire is to have a daughter to take care of me in my old age and keep me company. My husband is used to the fields, and he leaves at the break of dawn; my boys go about their affairs; we don’t have any neighbors, and I have no one to speak to.”

“So be it,” said the fairy. “You will have the most beautiful daughter possible, and I will make it such that she speaks at birth so there is no lost time. Bring your husband and your children: I hope the latter will be happy with what makes the joy of such good people like you and your husband.”

But things turned out quite differently. The boys, seeing that one only had to desire, found Father Thomas’s request ridiculously petty, while the woodcutter didn’t very much relish the idea of having another child. He shrugged his shoulders, and were it not for the presence of the fairy, he would have pronounced the first harsh words to his wife that he had ever said in his life.

However, the fairy made an excellent breakfast appear, and when the wine had revived his spirits, he regained his good humor. As for the woodcutter's wife, she couldn't swallow a thing; with the very first morsel she was about to eat, she complained about being very sick to her stomach.

"That is due to your state," said Coquette. "You are twelve minutes pregnant, you will give birth in twelve days, and when your daughter is born, she will already have the size, the features, and the mind of a twelve-year-old child. Name her Rose, for I will endow her with the freshness and coloring of the flower whose name she will bear."

"As for me, I grant that she will be as black as ebony and will become, before fifteen years of age, the wife of a great king," said a loud voice that was distinctly heard by everyone. A very malicious burst of laughter revealed that the voice was coming directly from the great pitcher that was in the corner near the chimney. The fairy Coquette turned pale, and all those present appeared horrified; but the woodcutter, who was jolly with wine, only laughed about it.

"Oh! the strange gift given to our child," he said gaily. "Since the little one must be rose, how would it be possible for her to be Black? . . . Even more, how likely is it that a great king would come seeking a woodcutter's daughter in the forest? By God, there is only one pitcher that could come up with such silliness, and I don't give a hoot about this gift." At that moment he kicked the pitcher and broke it, but such a thick black smoke emerged from it that they nearly suffocated from it.

The air remained infected, and Coquette used more than two bottles of essence to dissipate this bad odor. "Ah! cruel Barabapatapouf!" she cried, "does your rage have to extend to those to whom I wish to do good! I recognize here my enemy," she said to the woodcutter. "Beware of him, and don't go ahead and believe that he has good intentions by promising your daughter to a king: there is something there that doesn't bode well." Everyone remained saddened by this incident. But Coquette, who was beginning to tire of this whole woodcutter family, opened the window and disappeared.

Then a great quarrel broke out at poor Thomas's home, and his children, losing all respect they had had up to then, reproached him for having missed the opportunity to make them all happy. The son who often went to the city was especially inconsolable. "One or two million," he would say,

“wasn’t any more difficult to obtain; I would have quite easily got a marquisate for my father, and baronies for each one of us. We could have purchased lands, castles, and we would have been as rich and as noble as so many others who despise us today.”

“My children,” the woodcutter would respond, “is all that really necessary to be happy? It seems that you were all so happy when our master gave us simply a bit of prosperity relative to our state; and now you have more gold than you ever saw in your life, but one would say that someone wronged you in some way, and there is no longer any contentment for you.”

As for the woodcutter’s wife, she was wiser and seemed so happy to be having a daughter that she didn’t think about anything else. The twelve days went by, and she gave birth without much suffering to an infant smaller than ordinary infants.[6] But it had barely seen the light of day when it slipped from her arms and suddenly grew into a child twelve or thirteen years old who couldn’t have been better formed and appearing. She was a young girl of accomplished beauty and so well behaved that she took a great courtesy before the woodcutter, kissed the hand of her mother, and hugged her brothers with the greatest sense of friendship in the world; but the latter pushed her away. For, thinking that she would get all the preference, they were jealous about it and hardly concerned themselves with her beauty.

Rose (as she was named) was born well coiffed, for she had lying over her forehead and her shoulders the most beautiful blonde curls in the world. Her little lappet[7] was quite simple but most appropriate, nor did her red skirt and brown bodice distinguish her from the girls of the country; but although she came into the world with clogs on her feet, the clogs and feet were so dainty that there wasn’t a princess who wouldn’t have envied the delicacy and charm of hers.[8] Her plump, chubby hand was so white that it didn’t seem made for coarse tasks. Nevertheless, she immediately started to clean the house to relieve her mother, who loved her madly and never stopped doting on her.

When evening came, a little bed was prepared for Rose alongside that of her mother. But she arose early in the morning to make breakfast for her brothers, for she was so well intentioned and clever for her age that she had already sensed why they didn’t welcome her birth. She was hoping to win them over through her good deeds. But interest soon made their hearts go bad, and the woodcutter’s children had acquired in a very few days all the

harshness of the nouveaux riches. The woodcutter's wife, who was feeling quite well, quickly went down into the kitchen where Rose already was begging her not to work so much. But what was her horror, upon looking at her face, to see that it was of the most beautiful black possible! Her hair was of the same color and all frizzy. Since there was not a mirror in the woodcutter's home, Rose didn't realize it herself, such that she didn't understand what was causing her mother such terror. She asked her if she had had, without wishing to, the misfortune of offending her. "No, no, assuredly," said the woodcutter's wife, weeping. "Even if you were blacker than ink for the rest of your life, I wouldn't love you any less for it. But I cannot think without feeling pained about the beautiful face you had yesterday. People will mock you, and I don't even know what people would think of me if you were to go to town with this face here." Rose readily promised never to leave the forest. But when she found herself alone with her brothers, she was quite surprised to see that they were happy with her metamorphosis. They told her what had happened at her birth and how it was possible that she would become queen someday, since the first part of the "gift" she had been given was already coming true. The woodcutter and his wife were quite unhappy to learn that she had been informed about all these things, but it was too late. The reproaches the young men endured on this subject ended up driving them away from the paternal home, and at that point they came up with an evil plan that they executed some months later.

While waiting, they were living more easily with their sister, thinking that if she were to become queen one day, she could do them some good. Far from following the advice of the woodcutter with respect to her, they would seek every day to excite her ambition. And to encourage her in advance to take on the taste for royalty, they would praise her a lot about her beauty, her wit; they would pay homage to her in a respectful tone and, all the while in jest, would call her "majesty," which would not fail to go to her head and to entertain her.

But what was truly extraordinary is that Rose wasn't black every day. Every other day she would regain the pleasant face with which she was born. Hence one would have to conclude that the influence of the fairy and that of the enchanter Barabapatapouf were alternately exerting themselves. The woodcutter's entire family got used to seeing her good and her bad days. As habit corrects everything, they didn't find her any less pleasant under whatever color she might show herself. Good old Thomas was too

old to change his way of living; he didn’t want to hear talk about moving to town even though he had enough wealth to live there comfortably. And although he no longer needed to do so, he continued to make clogs for his own pleasure. In winter, Rose’s clogs were lined with white wool from the little lambs; she would work the wool most skillfully and make a thousand little pleasant creations that she would show to others without ever having learned how to make them herself. In truth, she was a bit imperious, a bit vain, and from time to time the woodcutter’s wife would surprise her pining away like someone waiting for something and who dares not divulge what is causing her sorrow.

She was growing up, however, in a remote retreat, and her brothers, tired of waiting for such an uncertain event [i.e., Rose’s becoming queen], executed a crime they had been planning for some time and that the honest woodcutter never would have suspected. Seeing that their father had yet taken money only from one of the purses the fairy had left them, they easily took away the other four. For they [the parents] quite simply kept them in the bread bin, which was not locked. Rising before dawn, all three of them left, telling themselves, in order to soothe their conscience, that these four purses were meant for them and that they would make their fortune with this money that the woodcutter didn’t know how to turn into a profit. When they would become quite rich, they would return to take him from his cottage and take care of his last days. Each of them made a belt in which they tucked away their gold, and with this sound agreement, more common among rogues than among honest men, they traveled more than one hundred leagues in eight days.[9]

The woodcutter’s wife and her husband at first didn’t understand the extent of their misfortune. They thought that their children had gotten lost in some hunt, and old Thomas ran around to different points in the forest in order to find them. But when he saw that his money had been taken away and that his sons weren’t coming back, he was forced to acknowledge the truth, and he thought he would die of sorrow over it.

“Cursed money!” he exclaimed. “You are the reason why these boys, who were previously decent and full of honor, acted like scoundrels, and may God punish them. It is this fatal gift that brought their downfall. Money is good only for corrupting men.” At the same time, he took out the remaining purse and threw it into the bottom of the well. The woodcutter’s

wife was somewhat angry, but she saw that her husband was so furious that she didn’t dare say a thing, for his reason was so troubled he would have beat her right there.

When he was in a state of mind to listen to her, he nevertheless felt that he was at fault. They were both old and could no longer work as in the past. The woodcutter’s wife sold some of her effects she had purchased during her prosperity, and they lived for a long time from what they got for it. Just when it seemed as though their sorrow could not increase—so afflicted were they by the conduct and the absence of their children—they saw officers of justice arriving, who surrounded their house and carried out a precise search and bluntly gave them the most terrible piece of news they could ever receive. Jacques, Pierre, and Paul had been taken to prison in the neighboring town. They were not accused specifically of any particular bad deed, but while drinking together in a cabaret, they had spread out on the table all the gold enclosed in their belts. The innkeeper caught a glimpse of them, and unable to believe that young peasants so coarsely dressed and with wooden clogs on their feet legitimately possessed so much money, at least not without having carried out some bad deed, reported them and temporarily handed them over to the police. These poor boys, quite afraid, had told them with all the frankness possible about the story of the violent wolves and the fairy Coquette. But since the bailiff, who had them prosecuted, had never seen a fairy, he didn’t believe a word of what they were saying.[10] Thus putting all their hopes into the clemency of their father, whom they knew would be most incapable of wishing their downfall, they invoked the woodcutter and his wife, who attested to the truth of what they had said. Since no money was found at their home, and they seemed to be living off their labor, officers didn’t know what to think.

Meanwhile, the woodcutter was arrested so that he could identify his children and respond to the judge before being able to confer with his sons. Pale and trembling like criminals, they followed the guards. The woodcutter’s wife was on the verge of fainting upon leaving poor Rose alone in their cottage, who was on this day so white and rose that the soldiers were gazing at her with great surprise and admiration. But they didn’t have orders to take her in, and her brothers had not spoken about her. She was crying out, asking to follow her mother; but since the woodcutter’s wife was more than sixty years old, no one would believe that she [Rose] was her daughter. In the end, no one understood anything about all this.

The poor woman urged her, upon leaving, not to go out at all, to live on the milk of her sheep, and to make biscuits with the little flour that she was leaving her. The good-byes were heartbreaking; however, the guards were telling the woodcutter that if he wasn't guilty, he would be free to return home within three days. Rose believed them and cheered up. But more than a month went by without her seeing them return. She couldn't help herself, despite being forbidden to go out, from following the path that led into the forest. And when, after having waited for them until dusk, she didn't see them coming, she cried so much that her beauty must have been a gift from the fairies for it not to be transformed by this.

One evening, when she was more distressed than usual, she lacked the strength to continue on her path, and having sat down at the foot of a tree, she fell asleep there. A gentle noise awoke her. But she was yet more afraid than surprised to see near her a richly dressed lord who was gazing upon her with great amazement.

"Are you a goddess or simply a mortal woman?" the prince said upon approaching her.

"Lord," responded Rose, "I am the daughter of the woodcutter who lives in the forest. It's getting late, and I beg you not to keep me any longer."

"You are quite a fierce beauty," retorted the prince, staring at poor Rose in an overfamiliar way. "But since my path is the same way as yours, I'm hoping that you would quite like it that I walk with you."

"I can't stop you," said Rose without raising her eyes. And as if she had been alone, she started to sigh, looking every moment to see if those for whom she was waiting weren't coming behind her.

The prince noticed at that moment that she had been crying, and delighted to have an occasion to please her and show himself as being sensitive, he begged Rose to confide her sorrows to him. "It isn't out of simple curiosity that I urge you to do so," he said to her. "But I wouldn't be able to see a woman cry without feeling her pain from the bottom of my heart. You are entitled to keep your secret. But until I have succeeded in serving you, I'm sure I will lose sleep and my appetite."

Rose timidly raised her beautiful blue eyes, a bit curious to see if the prince's face was in harmony with his words. But although in truth he wasn't ugly, she found in him such a hard and hypocritical look that she was not terribly desirous to confide in him. She was walking silently, and

when she neared her house, she was so worried he would accompany her there that she came up with a lie for the first time in her life. “You say that you are sensitive to my sorrows,” she said to the prince. “However, you will make them greater yet. When my mother sees me coming back so late with a handsome man from town, she will beat me and would not believe that you followed me despite myself.” This reasoning seemed so understandable to the prince that feeling enamored by a sudden passion, he promised he would take leave of her. In truth, he implored Rose to come back the next day at the same time, swearing to tell her things that would console her, whatever the nature of her sorrows may be. She didn’t say yes or no and only went inside her cottage quite disturbed by this adventure. She was remembering what the prince had told her and blamed herself for having doubted his sensitivity and for having mistreated him.

The next day, she mechanically took the same path as the previous day, always going to meet the woodcutter, who never returned. The forsaken situation in which she found herself seemed crueler than usual. Her provisions were starting to diminish. She feared dying of hunger. She was also thinking that this lord, whom she had rejected so rudely the day before, could have perhaps given her some news about her family. She regretted her timidity, and was forming the resolution to speak to him, when she suddenly saw him leaning against a tree with a preoccupied and dreamy look about him.

She feared missing her chance again, and suddenly throwing herself at his feet, “Lord,” she said, all bathed in tears, “an unfortunate girl who lost everything that is dear to her, speaks to you . . . You are so good, so sensitive!”

“What does this darkie want from me?”[11] exclaimed the prince with a cruel air. “I find you to be quite bold, little wretch, in addressing yourself to me! I don’t know what is holding me back from firing my musket in your head. I missed the hunt yesterday by following a pretty girl. I wouldn’t mind bringing to my mother today a new kind of game.”

Rose precipitously got up and dashed away in mortal fear. She heard the prince screaming with laughter. It was only when she remembered she was Black on this day that she understood why he had not recognized her. “Oh!” she said. “Here is such a humane man that he can’t see a woman cry . . . Because my color displeases him, he is ready to take my life. My troubles

get only worse, and my hopes are shattered each day." She wept the whole night. But although she was afraid of the prince, she couldn't help herself from returning to the place where she had seen him. I don't know what feeling was leading her as if despite herself: she feared his presence and wished for it all at the same time.

When Rose appeared, the prince had already been waiting for her for more than an hour. He approached her with eagerness and even with a respect toward the peasant girl that was surprising [given his rank]. But he was in love, and it is a fact that love elevates the object that pleases us. "Cruel beauty!" he said in a courtly style to which Rose was hardly accustomed. "You had me suffer a whole century since your absence; I spent the wee hours of the night waiting for you. My mother, the queen, had people searching for me everywhere, fearing that some misfortunes had befallen me . . ."

"Your mother, the queen!" cried out Rose. "You are the son of a queen? Did I hear correctly?"

"I betrayed myself!" said the prince, struck by his own words with a look of despair. "It is true that I am a king, but I will be miserable for it.[12] You will fear me, and one doesn't love that which one fears."

"One fears only the wicked," retorted Rose with a quite extraordinary little look of joy and dignity. "I'm quite content that you are a king, for, if it is true that you love me, I see that presently you can help me. I even predict to you that you will marry me. That is why I would very much like to receive your help."

The prince, who could hardly suspect what the fairy had announced to *Rose and Black* (for this is what she was called in her family), was astonished by the liberties she took when speaking with him. But he was far from finding this unbecoming. "You're ambitious," he said, smiling, "but there is nothing to which beauty cannot aspire. Tell me only how I can serve you, and you will see what zeal and love can do." Rose sat down in the grass and allowed him to kneel before her, as if she had already had a crown on her head. She then told him, but very briefly, that she had tricked him two days ago, that she was no longer with her mother, that the police had taken her away; that her brothers were in prison, although quite innocent; finally, that he should inform himself about all this and immediately free them if he wanted to please her and obtain her hand in marriage.

The prince swore not to lose a minute looking into this, and although she treated him most haughtily, he found her so adorable that he couldn’t help himself from admiring her. In a queenly tone, she forbid him to follow her, and when he tried to get her to promise to return the next day, she told him that she would come only the day after, without wanting to give any other reasons for it besides it being her will. At that point, Rose and Black didn’t sleep, but it was joy that prevented her from doing so, not that she loved the prince at all, but she thought she was sure to be able to save her brothers, to see her father and mother again, whom she loved so much. And when she had thought about them, she also thought about herself; and since the enchanter Barabatapouf, who had had the nastiness to make her Rose and Black, had also destined her to be queen, she wasn’t so annoyed about it and flattered herself that he had not done this with bad intentions.

She dreamed all night about the beautiful things she would have when she would be queen, and that she would no longer wear wooden clogs, which had always caused her some pain. Only she felt it was necessary to conceal from the prince her intermittent face, which could have prevented him from marrying her, and she was in denial about what he might think when their marriage took place.

Consequently, she would go to the woods only on the days where her complexion had the whiteness of lilies and the freshness of roses; the other days she would remain in her retreat, and the prince wouldn’t dare approach it. This love affair lasted eight long days. For the prince, in order to prove himself, would tell her that the woodcutter was found guilty and that her brothers would be hanged if he did not save them for her sake, even though by doing so he would put himself at risk by neglecting justice and his duty.

However, the queen mother had been warned that her son was spending afternoons in the woods, that he was no longer taking care of business, and that he was head over heels in love. She was extremely concerned; for this prince was dubbed the Terrible Prince because of his ferocity with women. Until then, he hadn’t loved any of them but he would seek to please them, and when he had succeeded, it wasn’t rare that he would cut out their tongues, put out their eyes, or even throw them into the sea. The slightest pretext sufficed for that; and the queen, who was good, was thinking that this was another victim her unfortunate son was going to sacrifice. The courtiers told her to not worry so much about it, that it was merely a matter

of the daughter of a poor woodcutter, who was mad enough to want to marry a king. “Oh!” the queen would say, “I would consent to it if this would make him more sensitive. This miracle [of changing him] is perhaps destined for some village beauty, more lovely in his eyes than the ladies he saw at court.”

Whether Rose was naturally clever or that her destiny made it so, the prince freed her family and swore to marry her. He had her dressed in magnificent clothing, which couldn’t embellish her but which greatly disguised her. And upon placing her on the balcony in a pavilion he had had raised in the same spot where he had seen her for the first time, she had the pleasure of seeing the woodcutter, the woodcutter’s wife, and their children, who were quite happily returning to their cottage.

It is true that they were thinking they would see her again, not knowing what had happened in their absence. She was longing to give them some kind of sign, thinking that they would be sorrowful not finding her there anymore; but the slightest indiscretion would have prevented her from becoming queen.[13] The prince was observing her, and she contented herself with sighing profoundly.

What surprised her somewhat was seeing with her brothers a young man who could well have been twenty years old and who appeared to her as beautiful as Cupid. He was somewhat poorly dressed, and appeared poor; but for the rest, gay and cheerful. She didn’t know him, but as long as she was able to see him, she couldn’t take her eyes off him.

Rose upheld the promise she had given the prince; she followed him to court, and the queen, quite surprised that he loved her enough to marry her, didn’t want to delay the wedding for a single moment. Besides, her beauty, her gentleness, caught her [the queen’s] attention, and out of fear that the prince would change his mind, they were married immediately.

Rose didn’t seem surprised at all by her fate. She was affable with everyone and very respectful with the queen. People were saying: “The king did something mad, but this charming girl is his excuse, and there isn’t a soul who wouldn’t want to be as mad as him.”

After the ceremony and the meal, which were magnificent, a superb ball was given. Rose was dancing fairly well for a queen. Her figure, young and naive, was shining with grace over everything else, and she surrendered herself without a thought to the pleasures of such a beautiful day. The

prince, most attentive toward her, was dancing a quadrille[14] when midnight struck: it was the hour when Rose would retake her Black face.[15] She had given this no thought at all, and the astonishment of those who surrounded her wasn't clear to her at first. But her husband, the prince, who before was gazing upon her with such passion and tenderness, suddenly threw her such a furious look that everyone trembled.

"What is this metamorphosis?" he said to her, rudely taking her by the arm. "Is this really the princess that I married this morning?" Rose lowered her head, mortified. She was still wearing her diadem, the crown diamonds —there was no way to doubt that this wasn't the same person. "You will perish, wretched Black girl!" he added, transported by his fury. "One does not deceive a prince such as myself with impunity." He took out a dagger and was going to strike her in the middle of the ball when he changed his mind. "I was going to do you too much of an honor, and it is not by my hand that you must die. I intend to have my cooks cut you up into morsels and make a stew of you that I will feed to my dogs." The queen appeared, and since she was as humane as the prince was cruel, she felt that there was only one way to save her. It was to appear even angrier than her son. "I am most sensitive to your affront," she said to him. "And since you have reproached me on other occasions for my weakness, I want to prove to you that I also know how to punish. Your orders will be executed; I will preside over them myself." At once, she signaled to her guards to seize poor Rose, whom they led away with a long iron chain that they fastened around her neck. She thought she was done for and let out heart-wrenching cries, which delighted the prince; the queen seemed hardly affected by them.

The queen was given the responsibility of this affair, and when she saw herself at liberty, she had the poor princess taken to a great pigeon coop, which was at the far end of the palace. She was brought fresh straw, and in order to console her, Rose was told that the queen would come the next day to see her and to question her.

Despite this hope, which prevented her from dying right away, she had some terrible thoughts. "Oh! what a night for a wedding day!" she cried. "I'm queen, and I'm sleeping with pigeons. They are so happy! . . . They love each other . . . They each have a companion, and I am all alone, abandoned by everyone!" A thousand ideas went through her head that she had never had before.

Rose becomes Black at midnight. From Félicité de Choiseul-Meuse, *The Return of the Fairies*, ed. and trans. Charlotte Herdman (Dublin: John Cumming, 1824).

The queen kept her word. Deeply touched by her adventures, her frankness, and the motives she had had to marry the prince, the queen promised her that she would soften her situation as much as it was possible for her. But she was able only to assure her life as long as she would remain in the pigeon coop, being certain that the prince would have some misgivings and would inquire everywhere to make sure that she had not found some means of escaping. A young deer, however, had been killed,

and [the cooks] having made a fricassee of it, the prince was told that this was his unfortunate spouse. But he showed some doubts in this regard.

Rose, although most grateful for the queen's treatment, was not accustomed to the luxury of cities. She needed very little in this regard to satisfy her. But she threw herself at [the queen's] feet and begged her to find a remedy for her greatest chagrin: she was sure that the woodcutter's wife and her husband were quite worried about her. She was dying to hear from them and to let them know that she was still alive, for she didn't doubt that her story would have made it to them, and they must be thinking that she had been served to the prince's dogs for lunch. The queen promised to send someone to them whom she believed was fully trustworthy. She sent them money, and Rose, who had kept her wooden clogs upon coming to the palace, sent one of them so that her parents would recognize them and be fully reassured. The queen did even more. She sometimes let the woodcutter send a young peasant boy to her, who would bring her cakes and cheese that they would make in their fashion and that she preferred to all the pastries of the palace.

This young peasant was the same one that she had seen with her brothers when they had returned to retake possession of their cottage. He told Rose everything that could interest her about them, and that the woodcutter's wife, her mother, had tried to drown herself when she did not find her [Rose] in the cabin. Rose, for her part, entrusted Mirto (this was the name of the young peasant) to ask their forgiveness for her disobedience in straying away from the forest and also for having listened to the prince. She had thousands of secret regrets, for she would admit that if she had had the intention of saving her brothers, she also had been quite tempted by the idea of being queen, and she found that it was only just that she was being punished for it.

Mirto found so much pleasure in talking to Rose, and he so often had cakes to bring her that he would spend entire days with her. He informed her that he was an orphan, and having had some work to do in the prison where good Thomas had been taken, he had met him and became his friend. For the price of some assistance that he [Mirto] had given him, Thomas had promised that he would take care of him if he were to recover his freedom and to show him how to make wooden clogs. Mirto was skillful and found himself to be quite happy. In truth, he didn't realize himself that his

happiness began the day he had seen Rose. He didn’t tell her he was in love with her, nor that she was beautiful, for he didn’t know anything about this language of love. But whether she was rose or black, he loved her equally and found the means to prove it to her through a thousand nice things.

Alas! poor Rose was only too sensitive. And when she had admitted her feelings, she felt the need to combat them and found herself more unhappy and more guilty than ever. “However Prince Terrible behaves toward me,” she would say to herself, “it is only too true that I vowed to be faithful to him and that he actually married me. It is quite difficult, undoubtedly, to love a prince who tried to make a stew out of me. But for that I must not love another, and I must deprive myself of the pleasure of seeing Mirto again.” She had the courage to tell him this, and it was only at this instant that he knew how much he cherished her. They cried their eyes out together. And sometimes Mirto, who would become unjust, like all unfortunate lovers, would say to her: “Ah! Rose, it isn’t because you are married that you want to drive me away from here. But you feel that you are queen and you don’t want to love a poor peasant such as me.” She would reassure him and found herself obliged to repeat to him that she would never love anyone but him to convince him that she had neither ambition nor pride.

A month went by without her seeing Mirto again, and she became sick with ennui and chagrin. The queen often came to see her and would bring her sweetmeats, a serinette to distract her, but nothing to adorn her, for it wasn’t worth the trouble since she would only see pigeons, which were her only company.[16]

Finally, one day she heard a great noise in the palace. People were walking about, going upstairs, going downstairs, ringing all the bells, firing the canon; and having looked through a little hole that was in the pigeon coop, she saw that the whole palace was in black: she didn’t know what to think. But soon an officer of the queen came to fetch her on her behalf, and even though she was Black on this day, he told her to appear at court, without any fear. The queen was just and didn’t make a crime out of a misfortune Rose owed to her birth and that she had not deserved. Rose asked with much worry about the prince, her husband. “Your Majesty is a widow,” the officer told her. “The prince was killed while hunting: here are some mourning clothes, which the queen asks you to wear.” Rose blushed with a thousand different feelings, but she followed the officer in silence

and with a sad air about her, as a well-born person must do when learning that she lost her spouse.

The queen was a mother, and although she was well aware of the ferocious character of her son, she wept profusely upon seeing her daughter-in-law. “Your spouse is dead,” she told her. “Forget his offenses, my dear child. I will do everything I can to make the rest of your days happy ones.”

The princess, upon these words, threw herself at her [the queen’s] feet and assured the queen that she would forgive him with all her heart. Then she added: “If Your Majesty deign allow me to speak to her frankly, and if she can take care of something for me in such a moment, I will tell her how she can assure my happiness.”

“Speak,” said the queen. “It would mean agreeably interrupting my pain to give me the opportunity to prove to you my friendship.”

“I was not born to be queen,” Rose continued in a modest tone, “and the color of my face must even less than my birth exclude me from this honor. My mother is a poor woodcutter’s wife, but she raised me with tenderness, and my absence will shorten her days . . .”

“We will bring her here,” replied the queen. “I praise you for your good heart.”

“This is not all, madame,” Rose continued. “My inclinations are in keeping with my fate, and since my freedom has been given to me, I confess to Your Majesty that I love a young peasant, who helps my father make wooden clogs. If I were to become the wife of Mirto, and if Your Majesty would help me do some good for my family, my old father would not work anymore, and we would all be happy.”

The queen embraced Rose and promised her everything she wished for, shedding tears of tenderness. “I regret,” the queen said to her, obligingly, “that I don’t have a second son to give you and that your heart is engaged elsewhere.” She was going to promise her to take her herself to the cottage, when she saw in the air a most simple mahogany chariot but whose mother-of-pearl wheels were perfectly made. Two beautiful white lambs were hitched to it, and Rose recognized them right away as being those the fairy Coquette left to her parents.

The chariot descended, and the fairy Coquette, covered in red and white and even adored with a few beauty spots,[17] as was the fashion at the time, stepped down and addressed the queen: “Madame,” she said to her, “I come to find my child, and I see with joy that you are disposed to allow her to leave you. For she has a lover who adores her and who remained faithful to her. Although he didn’t have any hope, it [his faithfulness] is rarer than all the treasures Your Majesty could offer her.” The fairy was very well received by the queen and, then addressing Rose, informed her that her enemy, the enchanter Barabapatapouf, had just been killed in a singular combat by another giant, with whom he had had a confrontation. “From this moment,” said the fairy, “nothing takes away my power to fulfill all your desires.” She passed her hands over her face and her Black skin disappeared, never to return again. The queen very well saw that Rose didn’t need any of her gifts. But she gave her portrait as a token of the esteem she had for her. Rose thanked her with as much respect as gratitude. Then she climbed into the chariot with the fairy and was in just a few moments surrounded by her family, who didn’t tire of showing their affection. As for Mirto, he was standing aside, not knowing if he should be fearful or hopeful. But the fairy, seeing them both embarrassed, spoke out and said to the woodcutter’s wife that she was asking her [permission] to marry these children, who loved each other and would not be able to live happily if they were separated.[18] The woodcutter’s wife said that she [the fairy] was the mistress [of their destinies], provided that this would make them happy. The fairy blessed them, gave them a whole herd of white sheep, a beautiful garden, a cottage, fruit, flowers, as much money that that would need. She did even more, for she gave them the gift of living a hundred years and of always loving each other. Wealth, royalty, were worth much less than that. And everyone who knew them envied their felicity.[19]

1 From Félicité de Choiseul-Meuse, “Rose et Noire,” in *Le retour des fées: Contes* (Paris: Pierre Blanchard, 1818), 1:103–59.

2 In the tale, the city is implicitly associated with luxury, whereas the woods are associated with a lifestyle based only on what is necessary.

3 The Beast of Gévaudan was a legendary wolf who killed several children in the mid-eighteenth century. In popular French narratives and iconography, the wolf is referred to as a “monster” and often associated with werewolves.

4 Here, Choiseul-Meuse follows in Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy’s footsteps, giving her characters fantastic names that also may have meaning. “Patapouf” can mean someone who is chubby or fat. Like d’Aulnoy’s character Mataba in “Belle-Belle, or the Knight Fortuné,” Choiseul-Meuse plays

on both exoticizing the name (Barapatapouf could sound like a foreign name) of the negative character and infuses it with meaning (in the case of d'Aulnoy's "Mataba," *matar* in Spanish means "to kill").

5 Interestingly, the louis is a monetary unit that dates from before the French Revolution, when French coins were tied to the king, imprinted with his image. The franc replaced the louis after the Revolution, so the use of louis here implicitly situates the action in a prerevolutionary society.

6 The notion that the heroine's mother gave birth "without much suffering" is important. Eve's punishment for the fall was to have to give birth in great pain. Here, the fairy has the power to lessen this curse on womankind.

7 A lappet is a piece of lace or fabric worn as a headdress by European women until the early twentieth century.

8 The daintiness of the heroine's wooden clogs could be read as an ironic reference to Cinderella's glass slipper: the true daintiness of a *glass* slipper implicitly is contrasted with the (normally) more cumbersome clog made of *wood*. And just as the glass slipper is suggestive of aristocratic fashion, the wooden clog is integral to peasant wear. This is a Cinderella tale that privileges the country over the court, anticipating later trends in which the prince isn't always a "Prince Charming," as in *The Princess Bride* (1987), and sometimes the peasant boy or the pirate end up being the true princes of the tale.

9 In the 1789 *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française*, a *lieue*, or "league," was equal to roughly 2,280 *toises* (a *toise* being about six feet), the distance one could walk in an hour. However, each French province had its own understanding of a league's measurement.

10 A *bailli*, or "bailiff," was a magistrate who could enforce the law, particularly under the Old Regime.

11 *Mauricaud*(*e*) or *moricaud*(*e*) in French is a pejorative word to refer to a Black person. It is derived from the French word for "moor."

12 In the tale, the prince is referred to as both "prince" and "king" interchangeably. We are to understand that his father, the king, is deceased and that his mother, the queen, is serving officially or unofficially as queen regent.

13 The text implies that Rose and Black has to renounce her peasant identity—and thus her family—in order to be queen.

14 A quadrille is a type of French square dance practiced by high society.

15 This moment the tale references Charles Perrault's Cinderella, who loses her elegant accoutrements at midnight. However, in "Rose and Black," race replaces class in the heroine's metamorphosis.

16 Confitures or sweetmeats are often found in fairy tales by the 1690s *conteuses* whenever luxurious meals are served. *Confitures liquides*, or "liquid confectionaries," include jams and jellies, while *confitures sèches*, or "dry confectionaries," include candied fruit and sugar-coated fruit and seeds. A serinette is a "small barrel organ originally designed for teaching cage birds to sing" (*Oxford English Dictionary*), which looks like a small music box with a crank.

17 *Mouche* was a small piece of taffeta that women would use to make a beauty spot that would highlight the whiteness of their skin. It was a popular cosmetic accessory in the early modern period.

18 Traditionally, one must ask the father's permission to marry, and a man would marry the couple. Here, the fairy, who will marry the couple, is asking for the *mother's* consent.

19 Interestingly, this tale ends with the establishment of felicity. In Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy's first fairy tale, "The Island of Felicity," the tale concludes with the loss of felicity: "Time overcomes

everything and there is no perfect felicity." This is one example of Choiseul-Meuse writing with and against d'Aulnoy.

George Sand

Amantine-Lucile-Aurore Dupin (1804–76), known by her nom de plume, George Sand, was born in Paris on July 1, 1804, yet raised in Nonant, in the French province of Berry, on her grandmother's estate. This pastoral setting provided the milieu for many of her most well-known novels, such as *La mare au diable* (*The Devil's Pool*, 1846), *La petite Fadette* (*Little Fadette*, 1849), and *Les beaux Messieurs Bois-Doré* (*The Gallant Lords of Bois-Doré*, 1857). The name Aurore, which she shares with her granddaughter, originates from her paternal ancestor Marie Aurore de Koenigsmark, mistress of Augustus II the Strong, king of Poland and a Saxon elector, Frédéric-Auguste. Her father, Maurice Dupin, was the grandson of the marshal general of France, and her mother, Sophie-Victoire Delaborde, was a commoner, giving her a sense of belonging to several social classes and contributing to her socialist identity. On December 10, 1822, Sand married François Casimir Dudevant. The couple would have two children together, Maurice and Solange, before legally separating in 1835.

Although her penchant for dressing in men's clothing and her love affairs with prominent writers and composers frequently overshadows her literary works, Sand authored a wide range of texts, including political pieces, literary criticism, plays, novels, autobiographical memoirs, and fairy tales. Her various essays announced her desire for social progress and her activism as a supporter of the poor, the working class, and women's rights. Several years before her death, her fairy tale "Le nuage rose" ("The Rose Cloud") appeared in the August 1872 edition of the *Revue des deux mondes*. The following year this tale was included in the first edition of a collection of her fairy tales, titled *Contes d'une grand-mère* (*Tales of a Grandmother*), published by Michel Lévy frères. According to her agendas, Sand began writing the tale on Thursday, July 12, 1872, and finished the text just four days later.

The tales in Sand's *Contes d'une grand-mère* are dedicated to her granddaughters, Aurore and Gabrielle Sand. In her dedication to "The Rose Cloud," Sand writes that the tale was composed to both entertain and

instruct the young Gabrielle, who is not yet old enough to read the text on her own or truly understand its meaning. However, Sand recognizes that owing to her advancing age and declining health, she may not be alive to teach her and so charges Aurore with reading the text to her younger sister and explaining the words she is too young to understand. The fairy tale has a pastoral setting in similar fashion to Sand's novels and reflects her passion for the natural sciences of her time. In the text, the heroine, Catherine, must learn to spin the "rose cloud" from her childish imagination and daydreams into fine thread and, in doing so, to earn her independence and wealth through her own hard work.

***

“The Rose Cloud” (1872)

Translated by Adrion Dula[1]

I

Catherine had three ewes[2] to tend. She did not yet know how to read or write, but she spoke rather well. She was a very good little girl, only a little curious and willingly capricious, which proves that at least she was not stubborn.

Shortly after Christmas, her three ewes gave birth to three lambs, two of which were very strong, but the third was so little, so little that one would have taken it for a little bunny. Catherine’s mother, whose name was Sylvaine,[3] greatly despised this poor lamb and said that it would have been better had it never been born, that it would not survive, and even if it did, that it would be so feeble it would not be worth the grass that it ate. These words grieved Catherine, who thought that this tiny lamb was the prettiest and best fit to her taste and her size compared to all the others. She promised herself that she would take great care of the lamb. She named her Bichette[4] because it was a female lamb.

She cared for her so well that she almost loved her to death. She loved her too much. She caressed her constantly, carried her in her arms, and let her sleep in her lap. Little puppies and kittens truly enjoy being coddled and pampered, but sheep, when well fed, prefer to be left alone to sleep whenever they want or to stroll and snooze wherever they wish. Sylvaine would say to her daughter that instead of nurturing Bichette, she was hindering her growth by handling her too much. But Catherine did not want Bichette to grow bigger; she would have wished her to be even smaller so that she could carry her in her pocket.

Every morning she led the ewes out to the meadow to graze for two hours and then again for three hours in the afternoon. The two large lambs handled their mother’s absence reasonably well. They seemed to know that

she and the others were going to look for milk in the meadow. Bichette was less patient or perhaps hungrier than the others. Catherine's heart was so touched by Bichette's woeful whining upon hearing her mother return that she, too, was on the verge of tears.

She [Catherine] was forbidden to lead the lambs out into the meadow. They were too young and the grass too cool, but she begged so much for her Bichette that her mother said: "Do as you like! If she dies from it, then it won't be a great loss and I would prefer to be rid of her. She makes you crazy and you care for nothing but her. You bring the ewes back too early and you take them out too late so as to not separate Bichette from her mother. Take her, then, come what may."

Catherine brought Bichette to the fields and the whole time there she kept her under her apron to keep her from being cold. Everything went well for two days, but on the third, she was finally fed up with being a slave to an animal and began to play and run again as before. Bichette was no worse off, but she was no better, either, and she continued to be a little runt.

One day, Catherine thought more of looking for bird's nests in the bushes than looking after her sheep. In the evening, she found a blackbird's nest with three plump chicks already well feathered. They hardly seemed timid because when she showed them the tip of her finger and imitated the cry of a mother blackbird, they opened their yellow beaks and showed their big rosy-colored throats. Catherine was so delighted that while leading her sheep home, she did nothing but caress and speak to them. It was not until the next morning that she noticed her great misfortune.

Bichette was not in the pen. She had been forgotten outside, she had slept under the stars, and without a doubt, the wolf had eaten her. Catherine cursed her baby blackbirds, who had made her cruel and negligent. All her love for Bichette came flooding back into her heart, and while weeping she ran to the meadow to learn what had become of her.

It was the month of March. The sun had not yet rose and over the pond that was in the middle of the meadow there was a thick white vapor. Catherine, after having looked everywhere—searching in every ditch in vain, in every hedge—approached the pond, thinking that the poor Bichette had fallen in. She then saw something that astonished her since it was the first time in her life that she had ever been in the meadow at such an early hour. The fog, which had blanketed the pond all night, dissipated with the

rising of the sun and rolled up into little orbs that struggled to rise up into the air. Some of them seemed to cling to the branches of the willow trees and be held there, and others, pulled back down and shaken by the morning wind, fell back to the sand or seemed to tremble with cold against the damp grass. For a moment, Catherine believed she saw a flock of white sheep. Yet it was not a flock of sheep that she was looking for, but Bichette, and Bichette was not there. Catherine wept again and put her head on her knees and her apron over her head like a desperate person.

Fortunately, a child cannot cry forever. When she rose to her feet, she saw that all the white spheres had ascended above the trees. They floated in the sky in the form of beautiful rose clouds that seems to be lured and led by the sun, as if he[5] wanted to drink them.

Catherine watched them dissipate and disappear for a long time, and when she lowered her eyes she saw on the bank, rather far from her because the pond was large, her Bichette motionless, asleep or perhaps dead. She ran over to her, and without thinking that she was dead, because children never think of things ahead of time that may cause them great pain, she put her in her apron and hurried to bring her home. But as she ran, she was astonished to feel her apron so light that she would have sworn that there was nothing inside. “How poor Bichette must have suffered to grow so thin in one night!” she said to herself. “It seems that my apron is empty.” She had tied it around herself and did not dare to open it, fearing that the little lamb she wanted to warm up would be cold.

Suddenly, at a turn in the path that she was following, she saw little Pierre, the son of Joyeux the Shoemaker, who ran to her carrying in his arms . . . guess what? Bichette, alive and bleating. “Hey there,” said little Pierre to Catherine, “here is your little lamb that I’m bringing back to you. Last night, she joined my animals when you were returning home and stopped to show me your nest of blackbirds. You didn’t want to give me one of your baby blackbirds, which I really wanted; but I’m better than you. When I saw in my sheep pen that your Bichette had followed one of my ewes, taking her for her mother, I let her nurse as much as she wanted and then stay the night well protected. I’m returning her to you this morning, thinking that you were suffering because you believed her to be lost, right?”

Catherine was so full of joy that she hugged little Pierre and brought him to her house to give him two of her baby blackbirds. He was so happy that

he gamboled like a little goat as he left for home.

Once she had seen the happy greeting of Bichette and her mother, she then finally thought to untie her apron. Only then did she remember putting something in it or believing that she had put something in that she took for her lamb. What could it be? “I don’t know at all,” she said to herself, “but it is hardly possible that I gathered up something that doesn’t exist.”

Fear and curiosity seized her as she climbed to the roof of the sheep pen. The roof, covered in moss, sloped to the ground where a pile of little flowers grew, planted by the wind, or rather newly formed green stalks. The roof was small but very pretty and soft and warm because it was made of old straw that was exposed to the morning sun. More than once during the summer, Catherine had forgotten to go to the meadow and caught up on her sleep, always too short for her taste. So she climbed up to the summit of this *fank*,[6] which is what they call the shelter for flocks of sheep in that region, and with great precaution, she untied her apron. What could be in there, my God? In this apron?

II

It was a blue cotton apron, which had been made from one of her Mother Sylvaine’s old aprons. It was neither new nor pretty, but in that moment if one had asked Catherine to sell it for a great deal of money, she would not have agreed, so curious was she to see what it contained. She finally opened it, and saw nothing at all. She shook it as much as she could, but nothing fell out. But something like a white vapor formed around her, and within a minute, a small orb-shaped cloud formed above her head. At first it was white as snow. Then as it rose, golden yellow, then pale pink, and finally as pink as the most beautiful of roses as soon as it surpassed the top of the hazel and elderberry trees surrounding the sheep pen and received the full light of the sun.

Catherine was hardly astonished at all at being able to gather up and carry a cloud. She only thought about how pretty he[7] was and how she regretted seeing him flee so fast. “Ah! Little ingrate,” she cried out at him, “this is how you thank me for returning you to the sky!”

Then she heard a tiny little voice that came from the rose cloud and that was singing words, but oh what words!

III

Catherine did not understand a single word. She continued to look at him, and he grew as he ascended, but he became very thin and split up into several little rose clouds. “Come now!” cried Catherine, “you’ve risen madly to be drunk by the sun, just as he drank all those who were in the meadow! I would’ve kept you in my apron, you weren’t bothering me at all. Or else I would’ve put you in our garden, where it is cool, under the big apple tree. Or at last on the wash-house, since you like to sleep on the water during the night. I’ve never cared for a cloud, but I would’ve learned, and I would’ve made you last, whereas you are now just taken away in pieces by Mister Wind or swallowed by Mister Sun!”[8]

Catherine listened to see if the cloud would answer her. She then heard, instead of one small voice, several even smaller voices singing like warblers, but without it being possible to guess what they were saying. And as these voices grew weaker as they moved away, Catherine eventually heard nothing.

She saw nothing more than the clear and beautiful sky without a trace of any cloud.

“Mamma,” she said to her mother, who had called her to lunch, “I should like to know one thing.”

“What one thing, my child?”

“What the clouds say when they sing.”

“The clouds do not sing, little fool. They groan and they swear when the thunder joins them.”

“Ah! My God!” responded Catherine, “I didn’t think of that. Let’s hope that he doesn’t land in my little rose cloud!”

“What rose cloud?” said Sylvaine, astonished.

“The one who was in my apron.”

“Be quiet,” said Sylvaine. “You know I do not like people talking at random just to spew foolishness that makes no sense. It’s fine for two-year-olds, but you are too big for such nonsense.”

Catherine did not dare say anything further and went off to the fields when she had finished her lunch. There was nothing left for her but a little blackbird; she carried it off and amused herself for an hour or two. But as she had risen early in the morning, she fell asleep in the middle of the meadow. She was no longer afraid of losing Bichette. She had left her with the other lambs in the sheep pen.

When she awoke, finding herself lying down on her back, she saw only the sky. And just above her head, the little cloud that had re-formed at the highest point of the air, and who all alone, absolutely alone in the blue of a beautiful day, shone like pink silver.

“It’s very pretty all the same,” thought Catherine, who was still half-asleep. “But how far away he is! If he sings again, I can no longer hear him. I would like to be where he is. I would see the whole earth and walk along all the sky without tiring myself. If he were not an ingrate, he would’ve taken me up there. I would’ve lain down on him as if on a duvet, and now I would see the sun up close. I would know what it is made of.”

The bush wrens were singing while Catherine was rambling like this, and it seemed to her that these chicks were mocking her and, while laughing, shouted at her: *“Curious girl, bah! the curious girl!”* Soon they were silent and withdrew, trembling with fear beneath the foliage. A great hawk was passing through the sky and was flying in circles just below the rose cloud. “Ah!” said Catherine to herself, “they mock me and call me curious in vain, but I should like to be on the back of this great bird of prey. I would see my rose cloud more closely, and maybe I could fly to him.” She woke up completely and remembered that she must not speak nonsense, and for that reason, she must not think of foolish things either. She took her distaff and did her best, trying not to think of anything. But, in spite of herself, she constantly raised her head and gazed at the sky. The hawk was no longer there, but the rose cloud was still there.

“What are you constantly looking at up there, little Catherine?” said a man, who was passing by on the meadow trail.

It was Father Bataille, who had just felled a dead tree in the neighboring meadow and who was bringing back the branches on his shoulders. It was

heavy, and he leaned against a willow to rest for a moment.

“I’m looking at the cloud up there,” replied Catherine, “and I’d like to know from you, who has traveled and who is learned, why he is alone and does not move.”

“Oh that! My child,” replied the old man, “that is what, when I was traveling the sea in a ship, I would’ve called a *squall*, and for me it would’ve been a bad omen.”

“An omen of what, Father Bataille?”

IV

“An omen of great storm, my child. When one sees this at sea, one says: there will be work, and hard work! It doesn’t look like anything at all. It’s sometimes as large and white as a little sheep. We would imagine that we would put him under our arm. And then it gets bigger, it blackens, it stretches across the sky, and then you take a hike! Lightning, thunder, gusts of wind and all the devil’s shop! We struggle not to be lost at sea, and we escape from it, if we can!”

“Ah! My God,” said Catherine, terrified, “will my rose cloud become evil like that?”

“In our region, and in the season in which we are, squalls are very rare, and, in my opinion, there are no real dangers on land. It doesn’t matter, yet it’s weird, your rose cloud!”

“Why weird, Father Bataille?”

“Why!” replied the old sailor, “I find him strange looking, and I should hurry to do my chores before evening. I still have three loads of branches to take home.”

He left, and Catherine tried to resume her spinning. But she always looked up, and it was not the best way to advance her task and round her spindle. It seemed to her that her cloud grew and changed color. She was not deceived, he became blue, and then a slate color, and then black, and gradually spread out until he had filled a whole side of the sky. Everything became gloomy and sad, and the thunder finally began to rumble.

Catherine was pleased at first to see her little cloud become so thick, so big and so strong.

“About time!” she said. “I see that it isn’t a cloud like the others. The sun has not been able to drink him, and one would even say that it is he who is going to eat the sun. And to say that I held such a cloud this morning in my apron!” She was very proud of it. But lightning struck from the thickest part of that terrible cloud. She was afraid and hurried to bring back her sheep.

“I was worried about you,” said her mother to her, “this is strange weather. I have never seen such a storm happen so abruptly and promise to be so bad at this time of year.”

The storm was terrible indeed. The hail broke the windows of the house. The wind carried away the tiles of the roof, the lightning fell on the big apple tree in the garden. Catherine was hardly brave, she would have hidden herself under the bed, and she could not help saying aloud: “Wicked rose cloud, if I had known your wickedness, I wouldn’t have put it in my apron!” Sylvaine began to scold her again, but the child could not restrain herself from speaking.

“Alas! My little one is crazy!” said Sylvaine to her neighbors. “Bah! Bah! It is nothing,” they replied. “It was the storm that frightened her. It will be over tomorrow.”

The next day, indeed, it was over. The sun rose joyfully. Catherine followed the sun and mounted with him on the thatch of her sheep pen. The house was damaged, but the sheepfold, lower and better sheltered, had not suffered. The little flowers of the roof, which the rain had flattened a little —the pretty yellow celandines, the white orpines, and the houseleeks—rose up and seemed to say to the sun, turning their little faces to his side: “You’ve come back? Hello, dear Father, do not go away anymore. We don’t know what to do when you hide yourself.”[9]

Catherine also wanted to say hello to Father Sun, but she was afraid of having annoyed him by letting escape the cloud that had fought so hard with him the day before. She did not dare ask her mother, who passed beneath her in the garden, if one could anger and calm the sun. Sylvaine did not like daydreams, and Catherine, who was obedient, resolved to no longer have any.

She succeeded. Her blackbird occupied her every day thereafter, until she died for having eaten too much white cheese. Catherine was grieved and [she] raised a sparrow, which was gobbled up by the cat. More grief. She lost her interest in animals and wanted to go to school, and then she took a liking to her distaff, and as she grew up, she became a very amiable girl and a very skillful spinner.

V

When she was twelve, her mother said to her: “Would it make you happy to travel a little, my child, and see new lands?”

“Certainly,” replied Catherine. “I always wanted to see the blue lands.”

“What are you on about, little one? There are no blue lands!”

“Absolutely there are, I see them every day from the roof of the sheep pen. All around our green lands, there is a big country that is blue.”

“Ah! I see what you mean. It seems like that to you because it is far away. Well! You can satisfy your desires. Your great-aunt Colette, who lives far from here in the mountains, and whom you don’t know because she has not been back here for more than thirty years, asks to see us. She’s very old, and she’s alone, having never been married. She’s not very rich, and you will take care not to ask her for anything. On the contrary, we must offer her whatever she may need of us. I am afraid she’s bored and will die for lack of care. Let’s go see her, and if she wants us to bring her back to this region, I am ready to obey her, as is my duty.”

Catherine vaguely remembered having sometimes heard her parents talk to each other about Aunt Colette. She had never understood what was said, and she did not try to find out more. The idea of changing places and seeing new things warmed her blood. She had become wise, but the wrens had been right in calling her curious. She still was, and it was not a bad thing, for she loved to learn.

So, she went with her mother by stagecoach. They traveled for a day and a night and arrived quite astonished in the mountains. Sylvaine found it very unsightly. Catherine did not dare to tell her that she thought it very beautiful.

When they got out of the carriage and asked for the village where Madame Colette lived, they were shown a road as steep as the roof of Catherine’s sheep pen, and they were told: “There is no other, follow it.”

“Well! That is a strange path,” said Sylvaine. “The world is upside down. One would have to have four legs like a goat to walk in this region. Here it is, your blue country, Catherine! Do you find it to your liking?”

“I assure you it’s blue,” replied Catherine. “Look at the top of the mountain, Mamma, you see that it’s blue!”

“It’s snow that you see, my poor child, and close up it’s white.”

“Snow in summer?”

“Yes, because it’s so cold up there that the snow does not melt.”

Catherine thought that her mother was mistaken but did not dare to contradict her. She was impatient to go see the truth for herself, and she climbed like a little goat, though she had not four legs to use.

When they arrived at the village, Sylvaine quite weary, and Catherine a little breathless, they were told that Aunt Colette did not stay there in summer. But she was a member of the parish, and her house was not far off. Then they showed them a little roof of planks covered with large stones, with fir trees all around, and they were told: “It’s there. You have but an hour to walk, and you’ll be there.” Sylvaine almost lost heart. It was as far to climb again to arrive at the house as they had already climbed to get to the village, and it was even steeper and more frightening.

She was afraid that Catherine would not have the strength to go that far, and the place seemed to her so ugly and wild that she thought of going back down and quickly leaving for her region, without telling the old aunt that they had ever come to hers. But Catherine was neither weary nor frightened. She restored her mother’s will, and when they had eaten lunch, they began to climb again. There was no choice of the right way, there was only one, and they did not need a guide. They could not have distracted themselves by conversing with him. The people of that country knew only a few words of French. They spoke a dialect that neither Catherine nor her mother could understand.

At last, though the path was dangerous, they arrived without mishap at the plank-covered house. There were, all around, very pretty pine trees, which left open a kind of gently sloping prairie, hollow in the middle,

without ditches or barriers, but sheltered from avalanches by very large rocks. Just above it the snow began, which seemed to ascend to the sky, first in white stairs supported by the black rock and then in crystals of ice of a beautiful greenish blue, which ended in the clouds.

“Now we are in the blue country!” thought Catherine very joyfully. “And if we were to go up a little more, we would be in heaven.” At this moment, she thought of something she had long forgotten. She said to herself that one could climb into the clouds, and she remembered her rose cloud as if from a dream she would have had. The child was so delighted by the sight of the glacier that at first, she did not pay much attention to Aunt Colette. Yet she was curious to see her, and more than once on the journey she had wondered what type of woman she could be.

VI

She was a tall, pale woman with silver hair and a rather fair face. She did not show great astonishment at seeing Sylvaine. “I was almost expecting you,” she said, kissing her. “I had dreamed of you and your daughter. Let’s see if she’s as I saw her in my dream.”

Catherine approached. Aunt Colette looked at her with large clear gray eyes that seemed to be able to see through people to the bottom of their soul. Then she kissed her, saying: “Very well, very well! I am glad that this child has come into the world.”

When the travelers were a little rested, she showed them all around her home.

The house, which seemed small from a distance, was large viewed up close. It was all wood but of such fine fir wood and so well built that it was very solid. The large stones on the roof prevented the wind from lifting or shaking the framework too much. Everything was very clean inside, and the polished and glossy furniture made it a pleasure to see. There were plenty of dishes and copper utensils. For beds, boxes of wood were filled with wool and horsehair with fine white sheets and good blankets, for it was never hot in that place. They made a fire there all summer long, and wood was never lacking. A good part of the trees that surrounded the meadow belonged, like the meadow itself, to Aunt Colette. And in this meadow,

which was very large, she fed fine cows, some goats, and a little donkey for transport. There was a young lad to look after the animals, and a young girl to do the housework and run errands, for Aunt Colette liked to live well, and twice a week she sent her to the village for meat or bread. In a word, she was rich, very rich for a peasant. And Sylvaine, who had not suspected this, for she had come to assist her if necessary, opened her eyes wide and felt intimidated as in the presence of a lady far above her. Catherine was also a little embarrassed, not for being more or less poor than her great-aunt, but to see that her aunt was superior to her by education. Yet finding her good and amiable, she calmed down and even felt for her a friendship as if she had always known her.

Then, from the very first day, she began to question her unceremoniously and learned that she had been the confidante of an old lady whom she had cared for until her death and who had left her enough to live.

“But she wasn’t very rich, my old lady,” added Aunt Colette, “and it’s not with what she was able to give me that I have procured the delights you see in my home. It’s with my work and my industry.”

“With the beautiful cattle you know how to raise?” said Sylvaine.

“My cattle keep me busy,” replied Colette. “But with what did I buy the land to lodge and feed them? Can you guess, little Catherine?”

“No, aunt, I can hardly guess.”

“Do you spin my child?”

“Oh! Certainly, my aunt. If at my age I did not know how to spin, I would be very stupid.”

“Do you know how to spin very finely?”

“Well . . . yes, finely enough.”

“She’s the first spinner in our area,” said Sylvaine with pride, “and they would bring anything to her to spin and she would always succeed.”

“Could she spin cobwebs?” said Aunt Colette.

Catherine thought she was mocking her and replied with a laugh:

“Why! Why! I never tried.”

“Let’s see how you spin,” replied the great-aunt, placing an ebony distaff at her side and giving her a small spindle fitted with silver.

“These are fine tools!” said Catherine, admiring the delicacy of the distaff, which was as straight as a reed, and the spindle, as light as a feather. “But to spin, my aunt, one must have something to put on the distaff.”

“One always finds something when one has imagination,” replied the aunt.

“Yet I don’t see anything here to spin,” said Catherine, “for you speak of a spider’s web, and your house is too well dusted to have a bit of it.”

“And outside, Catherine? Since you are on the doorstep, do you see nothing to put on your distaff?”

“No, my aunt, for the bark of the trees would have to be crushed, and the wool of the sheep carded . . . and unless one spins those clouds that are up there on the glacier and look like big balls of cotton . . .”

“Well! Who tells you that you can’t spin the clouds?”

“Pardon me, I didn’t know,” said Catherine, becoming pensive and puzzled.

VII

“You see,” said Sylvaine, “that your great-aunt is mocking you?”

“Nevertheless,” replied the aunt, “you know what they call me in this region?”

“I don’t know,” replied Sylvaine. “We do not understand the language of the mountains, and you may mock us as much as you please.”

“I’m not mocking you at all. Call Benoît, my little servant, who is serving dinner under the bower. He speaks French; ask him what my name is.”

Sylvaine called Benoît and quite honestly asked him:

“How, in this region, does one refer to Madame Colette, my aunt?”

“Well,” replied Benoît, “she is called the great spinner of clouds!”

The little servant was questioned in the same manner, who answered without hesitation the same thing.

“Well, I never! That’s surprising!” said Catherine to her mother. “Spinning clouds! Well! But, my aunt,” she added, “you tell me something I had always suspected, that these things can be done. When I was little, once . . .” She stopped when she saw her mother make big eyes, as if to say to her: “Don’t start that twaddle again!”

Madame Colette wanted to know everything, and Sylvaine said to her: “Pardon the child, my aunt. She’s still so young! Her idea is not to make fun of you as you have mocked her. It was your right; she knows well that it wouldn’t be the same for her.”

“But,” replied the old woman, “it doesn’t tell me what she meant!”

“My dear great-aunt,” said Catherine with eyes full of tears, “I wouldn’t allow myself to mock you, and yet Mamma thinks me a liar. I assure you that once, when I was little, I picked up a little white cloud in my apron!”

“Ah! Yes, certainly!”[10] said the aunt without appearing angry or surprised. “And what did you do with him, my darling? Did you try to spin him?”

“No, my aunt. I let him fly away, and he became quite pink and even went away singing.”

“Did you understand what he was saying in his song?”

“Not a word! Why, I was so young!”

“After he flew away, did he not turn into thunder?”

“You are telling precisely the truth, my aunt. He collapsed our roof, and he broke our big apple tree, which was all in bloom.”

“That’s what happens when one is not wary of ingrates!” replied Madame Colette, still very serious. “We must beware of all things that change, and clouds are things that change the most in the world. But I believe you’re hungry; here, dinner is ready. Help me serve the soup, and we will sit down at the table.”

The dinner was very good, and Catherine did her honor by eating well. The cheese and cream were exquisite. There was even dessert, for the aunt had a jar of honey macarons she made herself, and which were delicious. Neither Sylvaine nor her daughter had ever had such a meal.

When they had eaten, night having come, Madame Colette lit her lamp and brought out a small chest, which she placed on the table. “Come here,”

she said to Catherine. “You must learn why they call me the spinner of clouds. Come here also, Sylvaine, you will learn how I gained my small fortune.”

What, then, was there in this box, of which Aunt Colette held the key? Catherine was dying to know.

VIII

There was something white, soft and light, so resembling a cloud that Catherine uttered a cry of surprise and that Sylvaine, imagining that her aunt was a witch or a fairy, became all pale with fear.

It was not, however, a cloud; it was a large bundle of skeins of fine thread, but so fine, so fine, that it would have been necessary to split a hair by ten to make something so fine. It was so white that one dared not touch it and so fragile that one was afraid of tangling it by blowing on it.

“Ah! My great-aunt,” exclaimed Catherine, overjoyed, “if it’s you who have spun it, one may well say that you are the finest spinner in the world and that all the others are twisters of string.”

“It is I who spun this,” replied Madame Colette, “and every year I sell several of these boxes. You didn’t notice coming here that all the women make very fine lace, which sells at a high price. I can’t supply them all, and there are many spinners who work very well, but none come close to me, and so they pay me ten times more than that of the others. Who will have my threads, because with my work one can craft things that will no longer be possible when I am no longer of this world. I’m very old, and it’d be a great pity if my secret were lost. Is it not true, Catherine?”

“Ah! My aunt,” cried Catherine, “if you would want to give it to me! It is not for the money, but I would be so proud to work like you! Give me your secret, I beg of you.”

“Just like that, so quickly?” said Aunt Colette, laughing. “Well! I told you, it’s a question of learning how to spin the clouds.”

She closed her box, then, having embraced Sylvaine and Catherine, she retired to her room. They slept where they were, and there was a third bed for Renée, the little maid.

As this bed was close to Catherine's, they babbled quietly before falling asleep. Sylvaine was so tired she did not have time to listen to them. Catherine asked Renée, who was about her age, a thousand questions. She had only one thing in mind: she wanted to know if she [Renée] knew her great-aunt's secret for spinning clouds. "There's no other secret," replied Renée, "than to have much skill and patience."

"Yet to seize a cloud, put it on a distaff, prevent it from melting in your fingers, pull a thread . . ."

"That is not the difficult thing. The whole problem is to make the cloud."

"What! To make the cloud?"

"And yes, to card it!"

"Card the cloud! With what?"

Renée did not answer; she fell asleep.

Catherine tried to fall asleep, too, but she was too agitated; sleep did not come. The candle was extinguished, and in the chimney there were only a few embers. Catherine, however, saw a little light at the top of the room. She lifted her head off the bed and saw that at the top of the stairs where Aunt Colette had gone, there was a thread of light along the door. She could not stay put, and walking barefoot cautiously, she went up the stairs. It was made of wood, and Catherine was afraid of making it creak. She was so light that she managed to noiselessly reach the last step and peer into her aunt's room through the small slit in the door. Guess what she saw?

IX

She saw nothing but a very clean room with a small lamp hanging in the fireplace. There was no one in the room, and Catherine withdrew, quite embarrassed, for she felt that she had just done something very bad in wanting to capture by surprise a secret she no longer deserved to learn. She returned to her bed, reproaching herself, which led her to have bad dreams. She promised herself that when she woke she would not be so curious and would wait for her aunt.

Renée took her to milk the cows, and then they led them to the meadow, if one can call a mountainous steppe of all-natural greenery and not at all

cultivated a meadow. It was still a very pretty place. Beautiful cold water oozed from the glacier and, turning away following the rock, fell in cascades at the end of the grass. Catherine had never seen such beautiful water, which swept along all the diamonds under the sun, dazzling the eyes. She did not dare cross it, however, jumping from stone to stone as Renée did. But she got used to it quickly, and after two hours it was a game for her.

She also tried to climb a little over the glacier. Renée showed her how far one could go without danger of encountering crevasses and taught her how to walk without slipping. At the end of the day, Catherine was all emboldened, and she even knew a few words of the mountain dialect.

As everything was new to her, she enjoyed herself and took such a great liking to the mountain that she was grieved when Sylvaine spoke to her the next day about returning to her own land. Aunt Colette was so sweet, so indulgent! Catherine loved her even more than the mountain.

“Well! My child,” said Sylvaine, “there is a way to satisfy you; it’s for you to stay here. Your great-aunt wishes to keep you, and she has promised to teach you to card and spin as well as she does. But it takes time and patience, and as I know you to be a little too lively and subject to change ideas, I said ‘no.’ Yet if you believe yourself to be capable of learning how to spin as well as your aunt, as you have already succeeded in spinning as well as I do, I must not oppose you becoming as rich and happy as she is. It’s up to you to decide.”

Catherine’s first idea was to embrace her mother, swearing to her that she did not wish to leave her. But the next day, Sylvaine having told her that it was a great mistake to neglect the opportunity to learn, she hesitated. The day after, Sylvaine said: “We are not rich. Your big sister already has three children, and your eldest brother has five. I, a widow, fear for my old age. If you were rich and learned, you would save your whole family. Stay here. Aunt Colette loves you very much, your little faults don’t shock her, and I see her willing to spoil you. The place pleases you. I’ll come back to fetch you in three months, and if you wish to return with me to our lands, we shall return. If it’s the contrary, you will stay, and who knows if your aunt will not one day give you all she possesses?”

Catherine was still weeping at the thought of leaving her mother. “Stay with me,” she said. “I swear to you that I shall learn to card and spin

perfectly.”

But Sylvaine already was homesick. “If I were to stay here,” she said, “I’d die, or I’d go crazy. See if you want that! And, on the other hand, see if being able to enrich us, you think yourself able to refuse it.”

Catherine went to bed sobbing but promising her mother to do what she told her to do.

The next day Renée did not awaken her, and she slept till nine in the morning. Then she saw Aunt Colette beside her bed, who said to her, kissing her: “My little Catherine, you will be courageous and reasonable! Your mother left early in the morning. She kissed you with all her heart while you were sleeping and told me she would come back in three months. She didn’t want to awaken you; you would have had too much grief to see her leave.” And as Catherine wept very loudly, asking her aunt to forgive her sorrow: “I don’t think it bad that you miss your mother,” replied Aunt Colette. “It must be, and you wouldn’t be a good girl if you didn’t miss her. But I beseech you, in your interest, my child, to have as much courage as you can, and I promise you to do my best to make you happy with me. You must tell yourself that your mother is also very grieved and that the one thing that can console her is to know that you are submitting yourself with good grace to her will.”

Catherine made an effort to compose herself and kissed her aunt, promising to work hard.

“Today,” replied the aunt, “you will entertain yourself and take a walk. Tomorrow we will begin.”

X

The next day, in fact, Catherine received her first lesson. But it was not what she was expecting. No secret was revealed to her. Her aunt gave her a distaff loaded with linen and said to her: “Make of it as fine a thread as you can.” That was enough for the first time, for in Catherine’s native land only hemp was used in order to make canvas. She did not do too badly, and yet it was so far, so far away from what she would have liked to do that she feared to show her work. She was expecting reproaches; but her aunt, on the

contrary, paid her compliments, saying that it was very good for the first day and that it would be better still the next day. Catherine asked to stay at home; she would have liked to see her aunt working. “No,” she said, “I can’t work when I’m being watched. I work only in my room, and at your age, you can’t stay locked up. You’ll work while walking or watching my cows, as you please. I’m not forcing you to do anything, for I see that you aren’t a lazy person and I know that you’ll do your best.”

Certainly, Catherine was not lazy. However, she was impatient, and this way of learning on her own did not correspond to the idea of a great secret she would have received as one swallows a cup of sweet milk. Every day, she made a little progress; every evening, she brought back her spindle loaded with a thread finer than that of the day before. But she did not notice it much, and at the end of a week she felt boredom and vexation against her aunt, whose encouragement made her only more impatient. Renée, as amiable and obliging as she was, also annoyed her because of her tranquility. Her duty was to look after the animals and the dairy; she was not interested in anything else. Benoît was almost never there. He lived in the woods, and when he had time to rest, he hunted and loved no other company than that of his dog. Catherine was often alone; she saw her great-aunt only at mealtimes. In the evening, Madame Colette retired early to her room to work. Renée snored as soon as her head hit the bolster.[11] Catherine was thinking, dreaming, and sometimes weeping. She told herself that at the speed with which Madame Colette was leading things, she would have white hair like her great-aunt before she knew how to spin as well as she did. And, thinking of her mother, she feared her mockery when, at the end of three months, she would not find her much more advanced than the first day.

One morning, Catherine went out early. She had decided to spin so well that day that the aunt would find herself forced to give her secret to her. She went and sat down in the rocks in order to see nothing around her and not be distracted. But can one look at nothing? She raised her eyes in spite of herself and saw the glacier rising above her and the top of the mountain, which was exposed. Until that moment, Catherine had not seen it, because there had always been a vapor that concealed it. The sky being at last very clear, she admired the beautiful white lace snow next to the blue sky and regained the desire to go up that far, but it was very dangerous. Renée had

warned her, and Aunt Colette had forbidden her from trying, saying that it was good only for boys.

Catherine contented herself with looking while sighing at this thing so beautiful that she would have liked to touch it, and which appeared near, though it was very far away. She thus saw what she had not yet seen in the sky of these lands, flakes of small golden clouds gathering around the tallest crag of the glacier and which created a sort of necklace of large pearls. “How pretty it is,” she said to herself, “and how I would like to know how to make a thread so thin as to string such delicate pearls on it!”

As she was thinking about this, she saw something small but shiny on the crag of the glacier, a red dot moving in the sun’s rays, just above the necklace of small clouds. What could that be? A flower, a bird, a star?

XI

“If I had,” she thought, “my great-aunt’s silver glasses, I would certainly see what it is, for she told me that with these glasses she saw all that the naked eye doesn’t see.”

She had to content herself with her eyes, and, still looking, she saw the little red spot attracting all the little golden clouds to it until it was so enveloped that it could no longer be seen at all. All the little clouds gathered together made one big one that shone and turned into a golden ball at the highest summit, like the rooster of a weather vane on a bell tower.

After a moment, this ball rose and rose, becoming smaller and smaller, until it became all rose colored. Catherine heard it sing in a voice as pure as crystal and in the prettiest melody in the world: “Good morning, Catherine. Catherine, do you recognize me?”

“Yes, yes,” cried Catherine. “I recognize you, I carried you into my apron! You are my little friend, the rose cloud, the one who speaks and whose words I hear now. Dear little cloud, you’re a bit mad, you broke my beautiful blooming apple tree, but I forgive you! You are so pink, and I love you so much!”

The cloud replied: “It was not I, Catherine, who broke your blossoming apple tree; it was the thunder, a wicked one who lodges in my heart and

makes me go mad. But see how sweet and calm I am when you look at me with goodwill! Will you not come someday to the top of the glacier? It's not as difficult as you were told. It is very easy, you have only to want. Besides, I will be there, and if you fall, you will fall on me. I will support you so that no harm will come to you. Come tomorrow, Catherine, come at daybreak. I shall wait for you all night, and if you do not come, I shall have so much grief that I will melt away in great tears and there will be rain all day."

"I will go!" cried Catherine. "I will go, of course!"

No sooner had she made this reply than she heard a sound like a cannon-shot followed by a burst of machine-gun fire. She was so frightened that she fled, thinking that the mischievous cloud was beginning to betray her again and to reward her with evil for her good. As she was running all distraught toward the house, she met Benoît, who was quietly going out with his dog.

"Is it you," she said, "who made the rumble of thunder with your rifle?"

"The noise of a moment ago?" he replied, laughing. "It's neither thunder nor my rifle; it's an avalanche."

"What do you mean?"

"It is the ice that melts in the sun, which bursts and rolls, dragging stones, earth, and sometimes trees, when they are in its passage. Consequently, even people, if misfortune sees to it that they don't get out of the way in time. But one doesn't always have bad luck, it is even very rare, and one has to get accustomed to seeing these accidents. Now that beautiful weather has returned, it will be seen every day, and maybe at every hour."

"I'll get used to it. But since you are here, Benoît, tell me if you would climb on the great crag of the glacier, you who are a boy and who aren't afraid of anything?"

"No," said Benoît, "one doesn't climb these crags. But I was very close and I touched the foot of it. It's not the season to have fun at this, it's too hot, and crevasses can open at any moment."

"But could you tell me what we see now and again in red on the point of the big crag?"

"So you saw the red dot? You have good eyes! It is a flag that travelers had planted on the highest rock of the mountain about a month ago to let those who looked up from below know that they had managed to climb up that far. There came a strong gust of wind, which forced them to descend

very quickly, leaving behind their flag, which the gale had carried to the crest of the glacier and which remains hung there until another storm will detach it.”

Catherine had to be satisfied with Benoît’s explanation. But a fanciful idea passed through her head, which came back to her when she saw from afar Aunt Colette walking at the foot of the glacier with her caplet of scarlet wool on her head and shoulders. She was not so far away that Catherine could not recognize her, and although the poor child had not spun three yards of thread that day, she went straight to meet her, without thinking that she was leaving her distaff full and its spindle empty.

XII

When she approached her aunt, Catherine became aware that she was distracted. But it was too late to retreat. She approached her aunt resolutely, asking her if she was not afraid of tiring herself by going up like that on the glacier.

“At my age,” replied Madame Colette, “one no longer tires, one walks with drive, and one’s legs follow without knowing if they exist. But I do not come from the glacier, my child. It is not safe at this time. I follow the right paths; there are always some safe when one knows them.”

“So, my great aunt, was it you who were up there about an hour ago? I saw your red hood.”

“Up there, Catherine? What do you call up there?”

“I don’t know,” said Catherine, embarrassed. “I thought I saw you in the sky above the clouds.”

“Who could have made you think I was capable of going so high? Do you take me for a fairy?”

“My God! My aunt, if you were a fairy, what would be astonishing about that? I don’t want to upset you. It is said that there are good and evil fairies. You can only be among the good, and the people of the village who go up here, and whom I’m beginning to understand, rightly say that you work like a fairy.”

“I have often been told this,” replied Madame Colette. “But it’s a way of speaking, and I’m no fairy for that. I see that you have a little head filled with funny ideas. It’s your age, and I don’t want to see you as reasonable as me—it would be too soon. Yet a tiny bit of reason would not hurt you, my darling. I see that you did not learn to spin much today!”

Illustration by Albert Puyplat. From George Sand, “Le nuage rose,” in *Contes d’une grand-mère* (Paris: Boivin, 1934).

“Alas! My aunt, you might say that I didn’t spin at all!”

“Do not cry, my child, it will come, it will come with time and patience . . .”

“Ah! You always say so,” exclaimed Catherine, vexed. “You really have too much patience, my dear great-aunt! You treat me like a little child, you do not believe me capable of learning quickly, and if you would, however . . . !”

“Let’s go!” said the aunt, “you reproach me as if there were a secret to replace will and perseverance. I tell you that I don’t know of any and that none have been revealed to me. Are you pouting? You have some idea that I can’t even guess. Will you open your heart to me and let me read it like a book?”

“Yes, I wish it so,” said Catherine, sitting down on a large mossy stone beside Madame Colette. “I will tell you everything, for I have a guilty conscience, and I think that’s what is making me a little crazy.”

Catherine then confessed about her curiosity and related how she had looked through the crack of her aunt’s door. “I saw nothing, and nothing surprised me,” she said. “You were not there. But if you had not gone out, I would have seen you work, and I would have stolen your secret.”

“You would not have stolen anything at all,” replied Madame Colette. “I repeat that I have no secret. If you had entered my room, you could have climbed into my studio, which is above it. It is there that I card the so-called *cloud*, and as it is unhealthy to card in a house because of the small strands entering the nostrils and lungs, I do this work at the highest peak of my chalet, in a place where the air circulates freely and carries away, in the distance, those imperceptible twigs that would injure you and others. But you do not tell me everything, Catherine: What idea do you make of clouds, since you still talk about it? Do you confuse the clouds of heaven with the fine white matter I extract from linen and which in our land of skillful spinners we call cloud to say a light thing par excellence?”

Catherine was very mortified at seeing that she had foolishly made an error on the meaning of a word and that she had built a thousand chimeras on a very simple metaphor. All this did not explain her own visions, and desirous of having a clear heart, she returned to her pink cloud and recounted everything.

Madame Colette listened to her without interrupting and without making fun of her. Instead of scolding her and imposing silence on her, as Sylvaine

would have done, she wished to know all the reveries in this little head, and when she had heard everything, she became thoughtful, remained a few minutes without speaking, and finally said: “I see that you love the marvelous and that you must be careful. I, too, was a child and dreamed of a pink cloud. And then I was a young girl, and I met him. He had gold on his coat and a large white plume . . .”

“What are you saying, Aunt? Your cloud was dressed, had a plume?”

“It is a way of speaking, my child. It was a brilliant cloud, very bright, but it was nothing more. It was inconstancy, it was a dream. He brought the storm, too, and he said it was not his fault, because he had a thunderbolt in his heart. And one fine day, that is to say, a bad day, I was almost broken like your blossoming apple tree. But it cured me of my belief in the clouds and I stopped seeing them. Beware of the clouds that pass, Catherine, especially pink clouds! They promise good weather and carry the tempest in them! Let’s go!” she added. “Take back your distaff, and spin a little or take a nap; you’ll do better afterward. Never discourage yourself. Dreams take flight, work remains.”

Catherine tried to spin while chatting with her aunt, but her eyes closed, and the spindle escaped from her fingers.

XIII

She was suddenly shaken as if by an earthquake. She saw Aunt Colette standing beside her and for the first time angry. She had her red hood turned down on her shoulders, and her white hair floated like a halo around her beautiful pale face. “You sleep, lazybones,” she said with an angry air. “I told you to choose and you chose: you dream without doing anything! Let’s go! Stand up and follow me. I see that I must give you my secret. You’re going to learn it . . .”

Catherine rose and, still half-asleep, followed Aunt Colette. But she followed her with difficulty, for the old lady walked faster than the wind and ascended a great staircase of sapphires and emeralds with astonishing lightness. Catherine found herself in a marvelous palace of diamonds, where they walked on ermine carpets through crystal colonnades. She soon found herself at the height of the marvelous edifice. “Here we are on the top

of the glacier," said the aunt with a frightful laugh. "You must have the courage to follow me on the great crag. Take my dress, let's go! Don't be afraid. The pink cloud is waiting for you, and you have given him your word."

Catherine took her aunt's skirt, but she slipped and could not climb. Then the aunt said to her: "Take the rope and fear nothing!"

She presented her with a piece of thread so fine, so fine, that it was difficult to see it. Catherine took it, however, and although she pulled very hard and slipped at every step, the thread did not break.

In this manner she reached the tip of the crag made of ice, and her aunt snatched her distaff from her, which she planted in the snow, saying in a terrible voice: "Since you don't know how to use this, here is a tool that suits you!" And she put in her hands a broom as long and as hairy as a big pine tree. Catherine resolutely took it and found it very light. "Now," her aunt said to her, "it's a matter of sweeping." And she pushed it roughly into the air.

XIV

Catherine thought herself thrown to the bottom of the mountain, but this was not the case. She found herself held in the air by the thread her aunt had wrapped around her arm, and she was able to walk on the clouds as easily as if it had been the prairie. "Come, sweep," cried Madame Colette. "Bring me all these clouds here, all of them, all of them, without a single one of them missing."

Catherine was sweeping, sweeping, but never quite well enough or fast enough for her aunt, who cried out to her: "Let's go, faster and better! Farther, farther! Shall I send you a cart and oxen to bring in all these clouds?"

Catherine roamed the whole sky, bringing the clouds back in a heap with her big broom. In an instant, she would have cleanly swept the whole sky. "Bring me the heaps!" cried Lady Colette. "Push, push! I must make one cloud and have it in my hands!" Catherine pushed, and amassed, and

Colette put all this in a gigantic millstone that covered the whole crag of the glacier.

“Come back now,” she said. “You must help me. But wait till I put on my glasses!” She put her large silver glasses on her aquiline nose. “What do I see?” she cried. “You have forgotten the pink cloud! Do you think I wish to spare your good friend? Run quickly to get him and don’t let him escape!”

The pink cloud caused Catherine to run a great deal. Dragged by the wind, he was about to disappear: Catherine threw the thread that held her in the air, and immediately he came to snuggle up in her apron, singing in a sweet and plaintive voice: “Dear little apron, who has already saved me, save me again! Catherine, good Catherine, have pity on me. Do not deliver me to the spinner!”

Catherine returned to her aunt. She had raised and tied her apron, hoping that Lady Colette would pay no attention to it. The fact is that she was very busy. She had well prepared her millstone, and armed with very fine cards, she began to card the clouds. She was going so fast that in a moment it was over, and as Catherine stooped to remove a load of this dazzling cotton, her apron was untied and the pink cloud rolled into the pile.[12] “Ah! Little rascal that you are!” said the aunt, seizing the rose cloud in her card.[13] “You thought I would not find him! In the pile, pink cloud, in the heap like the others!”

“My aunt! My aunt! Mercy for that one!” cried Catherine. “Mercy for my little cloud!”

“Put it on your distaff,” replied Lady Colette. “Here, it’s carded, make thread of it, and quickly, and fast! It is my wish!”

Catherine took up her distaff again and spun away, closing her eyes so as not to see the agony of the poor cloud. She heard feeble complaints; she nearly threw the distaff and ran away. But her hands became numb, her eyes became cloudy, and she found herself lying on the mossy stone beside her aunt, who was also asleep.

XV

She rose and shook Madame Colette, who embracing her said: “Well! We were both lazy, we both slept. Did you dream of something?”

“Oh! Yes, my aunt; I dreamed that I was spinning as well as you. But what I was spinning, alas! It was my pink cloud!”

“Well! My child, know that I have long since spun mine. The pink cloud was my caprice, my fantasy, my evil destiny. I put him on my distaff, and work, beautiful and good work, made of the enemy a thread so light that I no longer felt it. You’ll do as I do: you will not be able to prevent the clouds from passing by, but you’ll have made a stockpile of courage. You’ll seize them, you’ll card them, and you’ll spin them so well that they can no longer make the storm around you and in yourself.”

Catherine did not much understand the lesson, but she never saw the pink cloud again. When, three months later, her mother came to see her, she was already spinning ten times better than at the beginning, and after a few years she was as skilled as Aunt Colette, of whom she was the rich heiress.

1 George Sand, “Le nuage rose,” in *Contes d’une grand-mère* (Paris: C. Lévy, 1886), 157–200; originally published 1873.

2 Although the original French text uses *brebis* (sheep), it also identifies the sex of the animal as female; therefore, “ewe” is used here.

3 *Sylvaine*: a name meaning “of the forest,” which speaks to the pastoral context of the tale.

4 *Bichette*: a name meaning “little doe.”

5 Although the French *il* may be translated as “it,” the pronoun “he” is used here to maintain the personification of, and the agency given to, the sun in the original text.

6 George Sand is particularly known for her use of regional terms in her writings. Here, *fank* is a regional term for “sheep pen.” Although perhaps more popular in Britain than the United States, the term conveys a similar regional usage in English as the original French term *tect*.

7 As with the case of the sun earlier, “he” is used for the French *il* here to maintain the personification of, and the agency given to, the rose cloud in the original text.

8 M. le vent and M. le soleil again reveal the personification used by Sand in the original.

9 Celandines are low-growing, hairless perennial flowering plants with heart-shaped leaves and yellow petals. They are native to Europe and West Asia and known in North America as the fig buttercup. The plant emerges in late winter and flowers from March through May. Interestingly, it is a poisonous plant if ingested raw and can be fatal to livestock, such as sheep. Orpines are also known as frog’s-stomach or life-everlasting. They are flowering succulent perennial groundcover plants native to Europe and Asia. Houseleeks are known for keeping their leaves throughout winter. They are also succulent perennial groundcover plants, which form mats composed of tufted leaves in rosettes. Their name is linked to the folk belief that growing the plant on the roof of a house will not only thwart off fire and lightning but will also bring prosperity and health to the inhabitants of the home.

10 *Oui-dà* in the original is an example of the language of commoners. It is a form of *oui* (“yes”) with added emphasis, which is why here it is translated as “Yes, certainly.” It may also mark irony, sarcasm, or astonishment. In works by Molière such as *L’école des femmes* and in Charles Perrault’s fairy tale “Les fées,” the expression indicates the lower social status of the character.

11 A long tube-shaped pillow.

12 Here, *ouate* is the word for “cotton,” which can also be used to qualify clouds. *L’ouate des nuages* refers to “fleecy clouds,” hence the connection between the clouds and spinning.

13 The rascal here is Catherine, which is clearer in the French with the use of the feminine *friponne*, whereas *le nuage rose*, or “rose cloud,” is masculine.

Louise Michel

Louise Michel (1830–1905) was one of the leading women and figures of the Paris Commune, a radical socialist takeover of Paris by the working class, which lasted from March to May 1871. Michel was president of the Women's Vigilance Committee for the 18th arrondissement (the neighborhood of Montmartre) and was "a member of the 61st Montmartre battalion," defending Paris "both as a fighter and a medical worker" (Maclellan 11). For her central role in the Paris Commune, Victor Hugo honored her in his poem, "Viro Major," written in December 1871, during her trial before the fourth Council of War. Michel eventually was condemned to exile in New Caledonia, where she was deported in December 1873. She was allowed to return to France in 1880, and she became involved in anarchist and anticolonial circles, leading to further arrests, speaking engagements, and publications.

While imprisoned and awaiting deportation, Michel composed and published *Le livre du jour de l'An: Historiettes, contes et légendes pour les enfants* (The Book of New Year's Day: Anecdotes, Tales, and Legends for Children, 1872), a holiday book designed for children and published by Jules Brare. It might seem strange that a leader of the Paris Commune would have produced such a work. However, Michel started life as a schoolteacher from northeastern France, and came to Paris in 1865 to open a day school (Maclellan 3). Her mother was a maid for a wealthy family, the Demahis, and Louise was the illegitimate child of their son; the Demahis embraced her as their granddaughter, providing her with the resources that eventually allowed her to open the school in Paris. In a review of Michel's *Le livre du jour de l'an* that appeared in the journal *La République française* at its release, the review author states: "This is, we believe, the first time this happens. Many women who wrote for children, the d'Aulnoys, the Leprince de Beaumonts, the Tastus, the Guizots, wrote tales, happy themselves, surrounded by a rose-colored and joyous world that inspired them. Never before has a children's book, a holiday book, emerged from a prison cell" (Michel, *Histoires* 226). In 1884, the book was

bowdlerized as *Contes et légendes*, with the violent ogre and ogress stories removed. This work represents Michel's lifelong interest in folklore. After her exile in New Caledonia, Michel produced *Légendes et chants de gestes canaques* (Kanak Legends and Epics, 1885), consisting of Michel's rewritings of the Kanak people's myths, legends, and folklore.

Like nineteenth- and twentieth-century writers such as Anatole France and Guillaume Apollinaire, who playfully represented tales as historically true,[1] Michel makes historical connections between the ogress queen of Charles Perrault's "Sleeping Beauty" and the historical figure of Béatrix de Mauléon in her tale, "The Ogress, Béatrix de Mauléon." The preceding tale in the collection concerns the ogre Gilles de Retz (or de Rais), often taken as the historical inspiration for Bluebeard. Michel "corrects" our knowledge of the figure by insisting that Retz killed some three hundred children—including some young women—to find mysterious alchemical secrets hidden in their entrails, for which he was eventually burned at the stake. Interestingly, in her 1890 essay *Prise de possession* (Taking Possession), Michel compares capitalism to cannibalism as she invokes the lore of vampires. One might read into "The Ogress" a tale of the people—represented by the wise woman Wilfride and the castle steward—who overcome a voracious usurper of wealth and power. Although the noble family is reestablished at the end of the tale, compared to other popular versions of the cannibalistic Béatrix, the steward is given more agency and moral high ground (in other versions, he is complicit with his mistress until she wishes to devour his own son), and Michel invents the wise woman Wilfride, who in the end is the character who truly saves the day.[2]

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1 See, for instance, France's "The Seven Wives of Bluebeard" (1909) and Apollinaire's "Cinderella Continued, or The Rat and the Six Lizards" (1919), both in Jack Zipes's *Spells of Enchantment*.

2 For other accounts of the anthropophagy of Béatrix de Mauléon, see, for instance, Victor Faguet's *Béatrix des Fontenelles* (1843); E. Brethé 97–100; and Le Grip 153–66.

“The Ogress, Béatrix de Mauléon” (1872)

Translated by Anne E. Duggan[1]

We have all read the tale about the ogress queen who wanted to eat her daughter-in-law and her grandchildren with Robert sauce.[2] This cruel woman, whose story is recounted in the region around La Roche-sur-Yon, was none other than Béatrix de Mauléon.[3] Everything is found in the legend, from the steward to the little dogs from the tale.

Béatrix’s husband, Guillaume de Mauléon, had left for Palestine. As it had been some time since there was news of him, everyone believed he would no longer return and they began to have great fear, for Béatrix was horribly cruel. Contrary to habit, when her husband had left, Lady Mauléon didn’t make a great fuss and, also contrary to habit, she was meditating something, which would not bode well. For each time she wasn’t making a fuss, she was up to some ugly business, and each time she was in deep thought, something bad would happen to someone.

So, this is what Lady Mauléon was thinking about: her daughter-in-law, who was living with her, Marguerite de Sivry, was a widow. Her husband, the son of Béatrix, having died at twenty years old, left her with two little children who could not govern the castle, the oldest being only three years old. Lady Mauléon would thus be able to seize power, which she regarded as supreme happiness. She was quite astonished that this thought did not fill her with joy. This is because remorse often sets in, without one suspecting it, with the first thought of crime, and once it bites into a heart, it then eats away at it incessantly.

Lady Mauléon, not understanding why she was suffering in the midst of her hopes of becoming mistress and ruler, thought to herself that it was because her supreme authority had not yet been acknowledged by all. As for believing that this was sorrow due to the loss of her husband, she knew very well that she didn’t think of him in that way. She thus had it announced that she had received news from a messenger that Lord Mauléon had been

dead for a year already, and she went into mourning. His vassals were very sad. They missed Guillaume and were terribly afraid of his wife, and then, since she was sad having received this news, they feared with good reason that she was contemplating some evil scheme.

One evening, the dowager Lady Mauléon[4] had sent for an old woman from the country, believed to be a witch, and, after a brief preamble—for she thought she had the right to do anything she pleased—Lady Mauléon said to her:

“My daughter-in-law, Lady Marguerite, has strongly offended me, and moreover, I know that she nourishes evil designs against me. I need a poison to kill her.”

One didn’t look too closely into household affairs in this period, and these things were quite frequent. A great number of lords who were leaving for Palestine had many crimes of this kind on their conscience.[5] Foulques-le-Noir, of Anjou, hadn’t he killed with his own hands Conan-le-Tors, count of Rennes, and Hugues de Beauvais, vassal of the king, and yet others? Robert-le-Diable of Normandy, did he have any scruples about sending his enemies to their death?[6] Lady Mauléon considered Marguerite and her two grandchildren her enemies.

The old woman concealed her fright, for otherwise she well knew that she would not be able to leave and she asked for three days to prepare a powder that undoubtedly would put the young woman to sleep. Lady Mauléon, having sworn to have the old woman killed if she were lying to her and if she were to divulge her secret, had her leave the castle through a secret passage.

Now, the old woman, like all the shepherds from this period, spending their life studying plants and often receiving recipes from their parents as their inheritance, had, in reality, a certain talent for healing animals and even men. She decided to save Marguerite. Barely arriving at her cottage, this old woman, whose name was Wilfride, sent her nephew Jehan to find the castle steward, in whom she had great trust for he was considered a very honest man, and Lord Guillaume had, in the past, held him in high esteem.

After having closed up even the opening of her chimney, for she was very fearful, the old woman said to the steward:

“I do not believe that Lady Mauléon is a stranger to the death of her son, who fell, it is said, in some precipice but whose body was never found. She mourned today the death of her husband, and I learned from a pilgrim that Guillaume continues to exist. What’s more, she wants to rid herself of her daughter-in-law and, undoubtedly after that, her two grandchildren. You and I must save these poor people.”

He was all pale, as much from the joy of learning that Guillaume was alive as from the fear that some misfortune would happen to Marguerite. The old woman gave him a white powder enclosed in a bottle.

“If Béatrix gives you a bottle similar to this one,” she said, “you will burn the powder, and in place of it, you will put this powder in Marguerite’s food. It will merely put her to sleep. Then you know where the tombs are; you will save her.”

Speaking about it in this way, they were both trembling through their entire body. Wilfride continued: “In case Lady Mauléon wants to carry out the task herself, for we must anticipate everything, alert Marguerite that she should not accept any food except that which you will have prepared. Then, when you take Marguerite out of the tomb, bring her to me.”

Having thus agreed upon everything, the steward returned to the castle.

Three days having passed, Wilfride went to the manor of Lady Mauléon. She gave her a bottle of white powder, similar to the one she had given the steward.

“Here it is,” she said, and as the old woman was about to leave, Béatrix retained her. She wanted to carry out a trial before her in order to kill her if it wasn’t successful. The old woman was anticipating this.

Lady Mauléon called forth a great white greyhound that followed her everywhere. She caressed it, smiling, petting its head, and, having prepared with a bit of meat some of the white powder, she fed this little piece to the dog from her hand. The poor creature, little used to being caressed by its mistress, looked at her with big, moist eyes and wagged its tail in a sign of joy, then howled, writhed, and expired, licking the feet of Lady Mauléon.[7]

“Excellent!” she said, “you can leave,” and her smile completely revealed her lips and showed her teeth. Wilfride, all the while expecting such a trial, would not have believed Lady Mauléon could be so cold-bloodedly cruel.

Meanwhile, the steward had warned Marguerite, advising her to be very careful, in order to preserve her life for her poor parents.

In the morning of the following day, Béatrix invited her daughter-in-law to have a meal with her. As the latter excused herself owing to a great headache, Béatrix, pretending to be offended, told her to stay in her room and that she would be served there. The steward was very careful. He saw the evil woman secretly put her white powder on the thigh of a goat that he had prepared for Marguerite. Having immediately thrown it into the fire, he replaced it with another upon which he sprinkled his powder and took it to Marguerite. Everything happened as the old woman had anticipated. Marguerite fell asleep. Everyone believed her to be dead, and she was, with great pomp, taken into the vault where the ancestors were resting in peace.

The little children were crying. In order to console them, Béatrix, smiling, said to them: “You will see her! Don’t cry.” The steward understood that she wanted to kill them, too, and he was on his guard. The brave man never left the children’s side and he even managed to take away the rest of the powder.

As for Marguerite, the steward had removed her from the tomb, fast asleep as she was, and took her to Wilfride’s house.

Having noticed that Lady Mauléon was more reflective than usual, he decided to save the poor little children at any cost, for at any moment she was capable of harming them. He thus brought them to the woods with him, and taking a roundabout path, he put them both in the arms of their mother, who was at old Wilfride’s home. The two women cried with joy.

“Now,” said the old woman, “this is what you are going to do: I saw this morning two dogs crushed by part of a fallen boulder. You will take their bodies, skin them, and put them in the children’s clothes, and, after having pounded them to a pulp as much as possible with stones until they are no longer recognizable, you will say that it is the children to whom this accident happened, and you will show this bloody mush dressed in the clothes.”

Everything was carried out as the old woman said, but Lady Mauléon, astonished that the terrible accident occurred naturally at the very moment she was seeking to have it happen otherwise, feared she had been discovered. She claimed to have been insulted by the steward and sent him down into a deep dungeon in anticipation of having him killed. As she had

confidence in two men worthy of the position of executioner, she was about to have him killed when the sound of the horn announcing the charge of the Mauléons was heard! A great troop of armed men was before the castle, and, as Lady Mauléon's men refused to lower the drawbridge for them, a herald cried out three times: "Open for the Lords of Mauléon!" Béatrix trembled with fear; she had to obey.

Guillaume and his companions in arms entered into the castle. How astonished everyone was upon recognizing the son of Lord Mauléon, whom pilgrims had picked up in the depths of a ravine into which Lady Mauléon, his mother, had had him thrown and whom they carried away with them, still breathing. Then, having healed him, they had brought him back to Palestine to his own father, and they were all coming back together. The first thing the two knights saw was the bloody mush that filled the little children's clothes, all displayed in state.

"Look here," said Lady Mauléon, "this is what your evil steward did to these poor children." The two knights wouldn't hear any more of it. They were greatly surprised that a man, until then so good, would have made himself so guilty of such a crime, but the proof was before them. In their furor, they would have pierced his body with their swords if he had been present, but they had to go get him from the castle dungeon, and coincidentally, the key was not to be found.

In the meantime, Wilfride arrived with Marguerite, each of them carrying one of children in their arms. Great was the surprise and joy.

As for Lady Mauléon, she fainted. When she came to, she was promised her life if she would indicate the dungeon cell in which the steward was to be found, which could only be known by the indications attached to the key. This woman thus provided not only the indications but also the key that she had concealed. That is why they spared her life. But as everyone was horrified by her, Guillaume demanded that she be locked up in a convent that he had built for this purpose in the area of La Roche-sur-Yon.[8]

Such is the story of the ogress, Béatrix de Mauléon.

1 From "L'ogresse, Béatrix de Mauléon," in *Le livre du jour de l'an: Histoirettes, contes et légendes pour les enfants* (Paris: J. Brare, 1872), 61–69.

2 Robert sauce is made with onions and mustard and is often served with meat, poultry, or fish. The tale referred to here is Charles Perrault's version of "Sleeping Beauty in the Wood," in which the ogress mother wishes to eat her grandchildren and daughter-in-law with Robert sauce.

3 There are several popular accounts of the cannibalistic Béatrix de Mauléon. J. A. Cavoleau (1818) and, following his lead, the abbot Migne (1850) report that Béatrix ate up all the children in the region, and when she wished to devour the son of her steward, he refused; she repented her ways and went to live isolated and founded a monastery. Victor Faguet (1843) recounts that she devoured the infants of her serfs, many of whom fled to protect their progeny. When the steward refuses his son, she repents, carries out a severe penitence that kills her, and becomes a patron saint of sick infants. Pilgrims visit her tomb in the Fontenelle Abbey to heal their children.

4 A dowager is the widow of a king, prince, or lord who received her title and domain from her husband during the minority of their male children. Dowager queen is the Queen Mother and regent after the death of the king; here Béatrix is the "dowager lady," taking authority over the domains of her husband while her grandsons are minors.

5 The story takes place at the times of the Crusades, during which popes typically encouraged participation in these military campaigns by absolving men of their crimes if they went to fight against Muslims in the Holy Land.

6 Foulques-le-Noir, or Foulques the Black, was known for his dark complexion and was Count of Anjou. According to the nineteenth-century historian Jean-Baptiste Capefigue, Foulques-le-Noir killed the Count of Rennes as well as Hugues de Beauvais, the king's favorite, "with his own hands" (186). He thus left his castle at Angers, sought absolution from the pope, and went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Robert-le-Diable, or Robert the Devil, is a legendary figure whose story was popularized in French chapbooks (*Bibliothèque bleue*) and which formed the plot "of what was to become the nineteenth century's most frequently performed and highly rated opera" in 1831, with music by Giacomo Meyerbeer and libretto by Eugène Scribe and Germain Delavigne (Brzoska 189). Nineteenth-century historian Achille Deville believes the legend is inspired by either Robert, the father of William (Guillaume) the Conqueror, or the latter's son (13–14). Since the thirteenth century, there have been different variants of the story, but most versions concern Robert's mother, who, unable to gain a child through her prayers to God, was granted one by the devil himself. As a young man, Robert pillaged, raped, and killed throughout Normandy, but after learning about his connection to Satan, he began to repent of his ways and, in some variants, dies a saint.

7 Interestingly, this is the part of the story for which Michel provided an illustration in the 1872 edition. She was very sensitive to animal rights and had stated, "[A]s far back as I can remember, the origin of my revolt against the powerful was my horror at the tortures inflicted on animals" (qtd. in Maclellan 3).

8 In other versions of the story, Lady Mauléon repents for having eaten so many children and becomes the benefactor of the Abbey of Fontenelles.

Part II

German Women Writers and the Legacy of the Fairy Tale

Introduction

Julie L. J. Koehler

More than four hundred German-speaking women wrote fairy tales in the nineteenth century, and this does not include the female oral sources for collections like the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*) (see Jarvis, *Im Reich der Wünsche* 320). Although some of these stories have been brought back into the light owing to two recent collections—Shawn Jarvis and Jeannine Blackwell's 2001 *The Queen's Mirror* and Jarvis's more recent 2012 *Im Reich der Wünsche* (In the Realm of Wishes)—there are still hundreds of stories that remain inaccessible to readers today. Very few have been translated into English, and even those in German are often only available in a handful of libraries in Germany. In this section, a selection of tales has been chosen from both well-known and more obscure authors, representing some of the ways these tales functioned in the nineteenth century: as Romantic literature, as children's stories, as letters to friends and family, and as subversive social and political commentary.

German uses the term *Kunstmärchen* to designate a literary fairy tale, one written by an author rather than collected from an oral source. A popular genre for centuries, the *Kunstmärchen* has been examined by scholars for over a hundred years. In fact, the study of *Kunstmärchen* is only a few decades younger than German philology itself, which the Grimm brothers and others developed in the mid-nineteenth century. The *Kunstmärchen* has been analyzed and reanalyzed, categorized, defined, and redefined. The genre's earliest critic, Ricarda Huch, analyzed *Kunstmärchen* as a part of her 1899 work, *Die Blütezeit der Romantik* (The Flowering of the Romantic), before the term was even coined (Wührl 4). The term was probably first used by Herman Todsen his 1906 *Über die Entwicklung des romantischen Kunstmarchens* (About the Development of the Romantic Literary Fairy Tale) (Wührl 4). The term has since been commonly used and appears in the titles of scholarly works: Jens Tismar's *Das deutsche*

Kunstmärchen des zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts (The German *Kunstmärchen* of the Twentieth Century, 1981), Paul-Wolfgang Wührl's *Das deutsche Kunstmärchen* (The German *Kunstmärchen*, 2003), and Volker Klotz's *Das europäische Kunstmärchen* (The European *Kunstmärchen*, 1985). More than one hundred different *Kunstmärchen* are discussed among the three books. Klotz and Tismar pull from German tales, and Wührl pulls from an even wider pool, encompassing all of Europe from the Renaissance to modernism. Although Tismar limits himself to the twentieth century, he still offers up a large selection of tales. Despite this broad scope, however, only one woman, Isolde Kurz, is given a chapter or subchapter heading among the three works. The seventeenth-century French women authors of fairy tales—the *conteuses*—receive mention in chapters about Charles Perrault's stories. Other women writers, such as Fanny Lewald, are mentioned briefly in comparison to works by male authors, but that is the extent of their presence—a footnote to the great work by male authors of *Kunstmärchen*.

This male bias is nowhere more obvious than in Wührl's description of the typical protagonist of the *Kunstmärchen*: "Der Held im deutschen *Kunstmärchen* ist meist . . . ein Jüngling . . . ein junger Ritter oder ein Prinz. Mal fasziniert ihn das weibliche Prinzip als kapriziöser Elementargeist, mal als dämonisch-medusenhafte Schönheit, mal als gewaltige Magna Mater oder als Frau Venus. Mal berät ihn eine weise Frau [The hero in German *Kunstmärchen* is usually . . . a youth . . . a young knight or a prince. The feminine fascinates him, sometimes as a capricious elemental spirit, sometimes as a demonic, Medusa-like beauty, sometimes as a powerful goddess or as Venus. Sometimes a wise woman advises him]" (21). Though Wührl later references *Königinnen*, *Kaiserinnen*, and *Prinzessinnen* (queens, empresses, and princesses) in his description of the major players of the *Kunstmärchen*, it is clear here that the main character is usually a male who is fascinated by some otherworldly female. The male incarnates the normative while the female embodies the other, a model that holds up relatively well when the *Kunstmärchen* is limited to those produced by male German authors. The list of stories that fits into this structure is quite long and includes many iconic *Kunstmärchen* by canonical German writers such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Eduard Mörike, and Theodor Storm, to name a few. Wührl's theory falls apart completely, however, when read side by side with the *Kunstmärchen* penned by women writers. Looking at just

the small sample of German women writers in this section and in Blackwell and Jarvis's *The Queen's Mirror*, we find that a majority of women's tales feature a female protagonist, and one who is not always all that interested in men. Although Tismar and Wührl claim to provide an analysis and typology of the entire genre, they fail to include *Kunstmärchen* by women as a part of their studies and, therefore, draw inaccurate conclusions about *Kunstmärchen* in general. Focused on male canonical writers to the exclusion of women, their studies necessarily only characterize *Kunstmärchen* by men.

The study of *Kunstmärchen* by German women is an endeavor with a much shorter history, beginning only in the 1980s, though the history of women writing *Kunstmärchen* is as old as the tradition of men's writing. In 1789, Benedikte Naubert published one of the earliest collections of *Kunstmärchen*, *Neue Volksmärchen der Deutschen* (New Folktales of the Germans), though she published anonymously. Catherine the Great of Russia wrote fairy tales years before Naubert, and her 1784 "Mährchen vom Fewei" is considered the first *Kunstmärchen* written by a German woman (Jarvis and Blackwell 15), although it was written after Catherine had left Prussia and married into Russian royalty. In the nineteenth century, nearly every German author tried his or her hand at writing a *Kunstmärchen* at some point in his or her career (Zipes, *Brothers Grimm* 108). There are hundreds of examples from women writers, many of which were once quite popular. The newly developing genre of children's literature was one in which women were allowed to write and publish more freely, and stories from famous governesses, like Karoline Stahl, were popular in the instruction of children. Many important women writers wrote *Kunstmärchen*, among them Bettina von Arnim, whose fairy tales and better-known epistolary novels were more of adult fare.

Nonetheless, in feminist fairy-tale scholarship, German women's *Kunstmärchen* remain relatively underappreciated. Much more has been written on gender roles of female characters in the Grimms' stories, the stories of the French *conteuses*, and modern and postmodern English-language stories, such as those by Angela Carter. Much of this scholarship focuses on representations of female characters, as passive in male collections and active in twentieth-century retellings. The female characters of nineteenth-century German women are, however, murkier. Women writers were not exempt from the ideological influence of the patriarchy in

which they had been socialized. The lessons of passivity and silence they had been taught were necessarily in conflict with their efforts as authors to find a voice and engage readers. Accordingly, the characters they created reflected this conflict. As Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres discusses in *Respectability and Deviance* (1998), German women writers of the nineteenth century struggled against societal views and the public opinions of male writers, many of whom were their heroes and mentors but also believed that women had no place writing (139). Of course women had been identified with the oral folktale (*Volksmärchen*) for centuries (Rowe 307), but these contributions were represented as repetitive—carrying on and maintaining tradition—rather than creative. At this intersection of oral female storytelling and the male world of print, of the passive heroines of male-appropriated collections and active heroines of the stories that were appropriated, we find the *Kunstmärchen* of nineteenth-century women. Produced in a complicated world where the oral was being subsumed by the written, they are the children of a hybrid legacy of conflicting attitudes toward women, the word, and storytelling. These stories provide a window not into the minds of male writers as they adjusted tales to fit nineteenth-century patriarchal values but rather into the minds of women writers, the rightful heirs of female storytelling, sometimes expressing the same patriarchal values we see in the work of male writers while simultaneously engaging in a subversive rebellion against patriarchal traditions.

This ambivalence found in some tales by German women writers is consistent with feminist and queer fairy-tale theories, such as Karen E. Rowe's "twofold legacy" and Kay Turner and Pauline Greenhills's queer and trans readings of the Grimms' tales in *Transgressive Tales* (2012). Both theories examine subversive messaging, feminist or queer, that remain in Grimm tales even with the edits of male editors. Rowe finds two layers of messages in canonical tales, one for the general public or, in the case of Grimms and others, one propagated by male collectors that conforms to societal norms, and another subversive message for other women (301). Turner and Greenhill find that a bounty of tales in the Grimm collection lend themselves to a queer or trans reading reflecting "non-normative expressions of gender . . . [and] marginalization, oddity, and not fitting into society generally . . . [OR] individual and collective identities that reverse, transcend, complicate, or deny sex/gender binaries of male or female or species binaries of human or animal" (11). In feminist, queer, or trans

readings of the tales in the Grimm collection, we can see the strokes of original tellers who were perhaps not so interested in passing along only standardized reflections of the dominant culture. The two tales in this collection that come directly from oral tradition—Frau Lehnhardt and Bettina von Arnim's "Beardless Hans" and Dortchen Wild Grimm's "The Three Little Men in the Wood"—both lend themselves to such readings.

Although German *Kunstmärchen* have been studied for well over a hundred years, literary fairy tales by German women have not. There are no broad genre-based theories that take into account how women helped shape the tale tradition. Consequently, the conclusions of scholars such as Tismar and Wührl are incomplete at best and false at worst. Although scholarship of the last thirty years has begun to bring fairy tales by women to the forefront, it has barely scratched the surface. Early studies by Rowe and Bottigheimer work with the idea of an anonymous oral female storyteller and struggle to wrench her voice from the male appropriation of the Grimms and others. Feminist critics have discussed the role of women in canonical fairy tales and collections, but without considering what actual women wrote, we still have only an incomplete picture. We are still in the process of recovering German women's fairy tales and have yet to incorporate our discoveries into a comprehensive critical history of the fairy tale. As Blackwell has said, "A question still to be answered is how women collected, authored, and appropriated fairy tales in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries beyond their collaboration with the Brothers Grimm" ("Laying the Rod" 24). Reading and examining *Kunstmärchen* by women writers allows us to listen directly to women's voices and asses their contributions to the development of the fairy tale in the nineteenth century.

Women Writers and Works

Praised and practically sanctified as ideal oral storytellers by the Grimms and others, women were seen as the keepers of fairy tales, but those who chose to pursue writing and publishing were often vilified for stepping out of their place (see, e.g., Joeres). For this reason, the women writers represented here occupy a unique position. Of course, the women writers here represent more than simply a contradiction in stereotype: they also

represent some of the most influential and well-connected German writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Scholars like Jarvis, Blackwell, and Ulrich Marzolph have recovered a number of their neglected tales, but so much remains undiscovered and unexamined.

By writing fairy tales (and, in the case of Karoline Stahl, Elisabeth Ebeling, and Gisela von Arnim, by writing for children), these women have situated themselves within a genre where it is acceptable for them to publish. The trivialization of their work as children's and nursemaids' stories allows subversive ideas to hide in plain sight. Karoline Stahl's tales are known for their pointed morals, but when one looks beneath the surface, her stories also clearly demonstrate that many of the undesirable traits of young women (vanity and flattery, for example) are the result of society's constant emphasis on beauty as the center of a woman's worth. Elisabeth Ebeling also takes aim at society, as she depicts a handsome and smart African man who is treated very poorly by a kingdom to the north. The African kingdom is strong and rich and would do very well if Europeans would leave them be. While these women speak to larger society in their children's stories, Gisela von Arnim tells a story for a much smaller audience, her sickly nephew who needs cheering. Short and light, Arnim's tale demonstrates how telling children stories could also be a creative art form. In addition, she places her tale in the context of woman's oral tale, though that woman is a mysterious ghost. Each of these authors balances in her own way this tension between being perceived as a *Märchenoma* (literally, fairy-tale grandma) and deviant woman writer, and their stories reflect their unique identities and times.

Even in the few tales in this collection, one can see the breadth of examples of women's fairy tales. Both Sophie Tieck Bernhardi's "The Deer" (1802) and Caroline de la Motte Fouqué's "The Tears" (1806) have much in common with other fragmented and metaphorical *Kunstmärchen* of the Romantic period; and, as Wührl described, they follow the adventures of men entranced by otherworldly women. In "The Tears," however, this relationship relates to mothers and sons as well as to romantic encounters. A similar structure is presented in the anonymous "Princess Geldena of Water City" (1801), where a sultan falls in love with a mermaid, but the names of the people of the sea are all Germanic in nature, while the world of the sultan is presented in an Orientalist form. In this way, the supernatural world of the woman is made familiar, and the world of men is

othered. The tension discussed above is depicted in these tales where otherworldly women not only act as dominant suitors but at times also desire to be rescued from oppressive situations, as in “The Deer.” In the fragmented Romantic tales, there is no clear-cut resolution, leaving open-ended questions about gender for the reader to consider.

A metanarrative investigates the relationship between male collector and female source in Adele Schopenhauer’s “The Forest Fairy Tale,” and the characters in the frame narrative actually discuss whether or not a fairy tale can be literary. Within the told story, however, we are presented with a male hero whose gentleness and almost supernatural connection to nature contradict period gender characteristics. Hedwig Dohm, a champion of women’s rights, also presents a subtle challenge to gender roles. When presented with a wish, her protagonist wishes to be something else but finds she is still unhappy regardless of her form. Dohm emphasizes that women do not need to become men but rather to receive equal rights and treatment in society.

Although none of these authors was as involved in women’s movements as Dohm was, they each had to negotiate the oppressive roles assigned them in the nineteenth century and find a way to express themselves, though not always as freely as men. Although some are well known and others more obscure, all the writers included here played an important role and directly influenced canonical (and male) authors who dominate nineteenth-century studies today. For too long, these women writers have remained a footnote to the work of male authors and composers, but we need not draw conclusions based on annotations and shadowy references anymore. We can go directly to the source and grasp the true merit of the products of women’s hands: the *Kunstmärchen*.

Anonymous Author of *Feen-Mährchen*

The anonymous author of the 1801 collection *Feen-Mährchen* (Fairy tales) is generally theorized to have been a woman, most recently in Shawn Jarvis and Jeannine Blackwell's *The Queen's Mirror* (2001), but as early as Arthur Wesselski's *Deutsche Märchen vor Grimm* (*German Fairy Tales before Grimm*, 1942), in which he writes, "[P]erhaps [the author] was not a he, but rather a she."[1] Her collection shows the influences of a variety of French and German fairy tales and ghost stories, and her introduction highlights a lifelong love of fairy tales (Marzolph 4). Her work was known to the Grimms, and they made copious notes in their personal copy of *Feen-Mährchen*, which demonstrates both their appreciation for the collection and their dismissal of it as unfocused and too influenced by French tales.[2] Ulrich Marzolph identifies a full third of the *Feen-Mährchen* tales to be inspired by those of Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy. The Grimms note the French connections as well and state that only a portion of the text can be considered truly German. In their notes, they sometimes comment on how tales in *Feen-Mährchen* were "badly renewed" or "modernized," connoting a negative judgment.[3]

"Princess Geldena of the Water City" is related to the Melusine tradition,[4] as well as to tales from *The Arabian Nights*, such as "Abdullah the Fisherman and Abdullah the Merman." *Feen-Mährchen* was popular throughout the century in Germany and may have influenced other tales about sea people. Notably, Geldena's beautiful voice and subsequent silencing is a prominent element in Andersen's "The Little Mermaid," which would appear thirty years later.

1 "vielleicht war es gar kein Er, sondern eine Sie" (Wesselski xvi). All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

2 Ulrich Marzolph includes discussion of this in his 2000 publication of the collection.

3 “schlecht erneut” (Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* 188); “modinisiert” (Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen: Jubiläumsausgabe* 307).

4 Melusine is a mythological and folkloric figure who is generally depicted as a serpent or fish-woman below the waist, in similar fashion to mermaids. The most well-known literary version was penned near the end of the fourteenth century by Jean d’Arras. The tale was then translated into German from the French in 1456 by Thüring von Ringoltingen.

“Princess Geldena of Water City” (1801)

Translated by Corrina Peet[1]

Sultan Achmet was young and gracious; his harem included the most beautiful and charming girls. One would assume that Achmet was the happiest man in the world since he was loved by his people and at peace with all the neighboring kingdoms, but in reality he was barely content, let alone happy. His impassioned heart longed not only for sensuousness but also for love, passionate love—a kind of love that he was also capable of giving. However, he searched in vain for this; although his harem abounded with beauty, not one of his wives knew how to truly captivate Achmet. When night fell, he would usually retreat to his grand, beautiful garden, where he enjoyed the cool air. Around midnight, he could often be found at his favorite place in the garden, a water basin hidden behind a rosebush. There, the flowers bloomed more freshly and the most pleasant aroma alighted from their petals.

One moonlit night, Achmet escaped the amusements of his wives and fled to his dear rosebush. He lay down quietly on the moss, where he remained for several hours without making a sound or movement. Suddenly, the sweetest, most mellifluous voice he had ever heard resonated from deep within the basin. Softly and languorously, she lamented about a faraway love. The song became quieter and quieter until it finally fell silent. Achmet waited until the sun rose, but to no avail; the voice remained silent and he had to return home without discovering who possessed it. That night, he collected all his singers, but no one possessed the sweet voice that he had heard. Dissatisfied, he retreated and sat down at the base of the basin. Neither on this night nor on the next several nights did he hear the delightful tones. He was about to believe that it had all been a figment of his imagination, and yet the singer’s grasp on him still tightened. He spent several nights away from the garden in his apartments, and even these nights were a blur. Finally, his secret distress compelled him downstairs to the garden. He hurried to the rosebush, where, astonished, he saw a tall

woman covered with a veil the color of his sea. In her hand, she held a sort of zither, which she strummed from time to time with her beautifully formed hand. Her song lamented the pain of an unrequited love. As he quietly approached her, she broke Achmet's heart without knowing it, and the singer leaped into the silver waves of the basin and instantaneously disappeared from sight. Achmet watched her bleakly. Now more than ever, he was mystified by her song and eagerly wished to see the mouth with the rose-petal lips over which the heavenly tones flowed, but to no avail. She did not call out a single word, and he was forced to return to his marble halls, where he spent the remainder of the night wandering about in despair. He often asked himself if a fairy had played a trick on him, but when he sang the tones again, his heart knew that a fair being had sung them and that he would never be happy until he possessed her.

Consumed by these thoughts, he went back to the garden, but this time to a part of the garden that his women often visited in order to cool off in the marble baths. A rapid tide surged through this part of the garden, cutting through the flowery realm in tantalizing loops. It had been a long while since Achmet had visited here. The women remained there until midnight, and because he now wished to avoid their company, he retreated to more distant gardens. The closer he came to the water, the more clearly he could hear the sound of many splashing bathers. Curious as to who dwelled here without a sentry, he parted an alder bush and saw his singer surrounded by many sprites dancing upon the waves of the tide. Finally, the band of sprites leaped from the water, covered their mistress with a veil from the current, and hopped and danced around her. She sat in sadness among her playmates and did not participate in their dance and games. She followed them reluctantly into the blue water, where she immediately disappeared from Achmet's gaze. "It is more than a dream!" he happily exclaimed. "The fair being loves someone; if only I were the object of her love and longing."

The next day seemed to pass more slowly than ever. At sunset, he lay down at the basin and pretended to be fast asleep. Shortly before midnight, the lovely singer appeared. She saw him lying there but did not flee. She approached him quietly and timidly, and as delicately as the night breeze, she kneeled down, bent her unveiled face over the sleeper, and pressed a tender kiss to his forehead. Suddenly, a male voice called "Geldena!" and with haste she leaped to the floor of the basin. "Geldena," called Achmet "lovely, graceful girl, you love me, but who is calling you? And why do you

run from me so quickly? Do you grace only those who are asleep in your presence?" As dawn approached, he returned to the marble baths. Geldena sat sadly among the flowers while her playmates frolicked in the water and swam away from her singing. He approached his mistress. "Geldena," he begged with a tender voice, "do not flee from me!" He embraced her slender body and pressed the trembling girl to his heart. In her effort to twist free, her veil fell. Achmet sat as if under a magic spell; never before had he beheld such beauty. He drew the being more closely and intimately toward him, and fearfully she said, "Oh Achmet, leave me, leave me for today. I will return soon." Tears fell upon her cheeks. He let the girl go, but the veil remained in his hands as the waves engulfed the love of his life. He pressed it to his chest and returned to his quarters full of reflection. Zulma, the most well loved of his women, awaited him, but he sent her back to her room and remained alone with his thoughts.

The next day, as he lamented about the unfairness of his fate, two of his chambermaids brought him a new slave for his palace. Half-dissatisfied with this, he entered the women's hall and saw his Geldena—her face hidden by her long green hair—encircled by the women. "Geldena!" Achmet called in a tone of utmost rapture, and pulling the veil from his breast, he covered her with it and escorted her to his chambers away from the gaze of the curious onlookers. There, he allowed himself to rejoice, but his joy was quickly tempered when his beloved, plagued by deep sorrow, began to dry her tears with her veil. He left her alone in order to ask his chambermaids how they came to possess Geldena.

"Today, we were at the marble baths earlier than usual," they explained, "because it was incumbent upon us to see that your wives were amused. There, we heard a loud exchange that closed with the words 'Go Geldena, be free of your veil and yield to the confession of your love.' We saw an old man and a young man, both with green hair on their heads and bodkin beards, and also the young woman, who, in the calmest manner, begged them not to cast her out. However, they repeated their words mercilessly and jumped into the current. Crying, the girl covered her face and hid herself in a bush, where we found her and brought her to you."

Unsettled by this story, he returned to his beloved, who stood crying painfully at the window as she gazed deep into the canal that surrounded the palace. Achmet pulled her from the window and, full of awe and passion,

took her tenderly in his arms and expressed his truest love. Because she could not be comforted, he finally broke out in tears, too, and decided to leave her alone with her pain. But Geldena held him back and fell into his arms, dried his tears with her veil, pressed him to her heart and lips, and, although she could not find the words, quickly convinced Achmet of how precious he was to her.

After a few days, he escorted her around the palace so that she could choose an apartment. She took the room from which she could see the water and the marble baths. She turned the servants away, especially the women. She often slept during the day and spent the nights awake at the window. Then Achmet thought he heard her playmates singing and mocking her, for she would be his first bed partner, although he had many wives. When he came to her in the morning, her beautiful eyes were bleary from crying. He had often heard her sobbing softly from the adjoining room. This broke his heart but confirmed a decision that he had made.

One day, he convened his entire council and in their company went to the palace and granted all his wives their freedom. They were all richly compensated but had to leave the palace that same day. Most of them did this quickly because they feared that this decision had been made on a whim and that the sultan would later regret it. Then he hurried to Geldena, who received him with open arms. A lovely smile brought life to her features, and through her sweet and intimate caress, she expressed her thanks and joy. Achmet took advantage of this moment and asked her tenderly: “Geldena, would you like to be my spouse, my one and only wife?” She blushed and bent her head. “Today?” asked the happy man. She bowed a second time and buried her blushing face into his arm. Achmet quickly met with all necessary arrangements and the ceremony was complete before midnight struck. He enjoyed the kind of happiness in the arms of his Geldena that only virtuous love can bestow. In vain, the sprites sang wedding songs under the open window: lying in Achmet’s embrace, Geldena paid no mind to these false friends. The next day, the new sultana appeared before the people and returned, laden with blessings, to the lonely tower in the palace where she had spent the happiest hours with Achmet. She often strolled around the garden in the middle of the night. Geldena’s gaze fell sadly upon the water, but because she feared the wrath of her relations, she never dared touch it.

Geldena’s pregnancy elevated their happiness, and one morning, when she discovered her zither and a golden book with incense, she knew she had reconciled with her parents and could look forward to the birth with joy. Finally, the longed-for yet feared day arrived. In the presence of her husband, Geldena bore a beautiful, cheerful boy, whose delighted father took him into his arms. While he cuddled with the child, Geldena opened the small golden book and threw a piece of the incense into the steaming fireplace. As soon as it burned into the air, Geldena’s mother and father appeared, surrounded in blue mist. Next to them was her brother. Having missed the others for so long, they rushed to one another and then kissed Achmet and the tiny newborn warmly. “Speak, my daughter,” said the old man, and touched her mouth with his rod. Geldena threw her arms around her husband, and the first word she spoke was “Achmet.” Then they both bowed at the foot of the Sea King, and he and his wife blessed the happy family. Her brother, Goldonar, had stood back but now walked toward them and asked Geldena to forgive his bitterness, which she immediately did and then led him into the arms of her husband.

As the wave of initial joy subsided, the king sat down with his new son and explained to him that Geldena would never have found mercy had heaven not graced him with the idea to grant his wives their freedom and to make Geldena his only wife. “For us, it is a crime when the daughter of a Sea King falls in love with a mortal. I sheltered my daughter from the existence of the mortal world, but Goldonar, who loved her very much, always took her with him to your gardens, where she saw and fell in love with you, even as a child. Her love for you grew as the years went by. Before you knew her, she would sit in your presence and observe with joy that your heart was free of love and that none of your wives had fettered you. We warned her daily, but in vain, for as soon as the evening came, she would flee from us to be in your presence. She remained silent and alone. Once, when she thought we were away, she divulged her whereabouts through her mournful song. She withstood her punishment for this without complaint. You know yourself how she exposed herself to you. This behavior continued, but only our family was aware. One day, however, when her friends saw her in the embrace of a man and she returned to us without a veil, we were forced—with heavy hearts—to carry out the rule of the land. We disowned Geldena, took away her ability to speak, and left her to her fate. You treated her nobly and generously—you have returned the

king’s daughter to her rightful place. Thank you, dear son, and may all heavens blessings be with you!”

Achmet, very moved, embraced his wife and vowed to her that he would forget neither her love nor the suffering she endured for him. The family celebrated the boy’s birthday, and as the sun set, they departed in order to return to their subjects. Oh, how Achmet felt when Goldonar jumped deep into the bottom of the canal with his son in his arms! Lifeless, he stood like a statue at the window and did not notice Geldena, who sat crying in the chair next to him. “My child!” called Achmet. “My son!” cried Geldena. It calmed his heart somewhat to know that the mother was also unaware that this separation would take place and that she was currently just as inconsolable as he. After the initial shock faded, Geldena thought that her brother had probably acted with the best intentions for her child and took heart so that her husband would release his anger toward Goldonar and think fondly of him as the beautiful man with sparkling black eyes and green bodkin.

Almost two years had gone by when Geldena was expecting her second child. One morning, Goldonar appeared before her bed and laid a lively, spirited, cheerful boy in her arms She immediately called for Achmet, who soon hugged both the child and his good brother-in-law. “But tell me, Goldonar, why did you frighten us so terribly by taking away our child so abruptly?” asked Achmet at last.

“You short-sighted fools!” answered the nobleman. “If I would have asked for the child, you would have refused me, and because the little one has relatives both below and above the water, fate dictates that from his first days of life, he must be taken into the sea where he would be raised for several years so that he can acclimate to life underwater. You see, Achmet? We would love to see Geldena at home again, but this is not possible because without you, she cannot return to us, and we fear that you would not survive the trip through the water.” Achmet thanked his good brother-in-law and, with a light heart, saw him and his son off that evening. Geldena then bore a daughter, who was as beautiful as she. Her parents visited her again, but in the two years that had passed, they had become old. They informed their daughter that it would be difficult to travel to her again and told her that they strongly wished for her to visit them before they

perished. That night, Goldonar took the newborn into his arms and, in exchange, left the lovely little Achmet behind with his parents.

The older happy pair disappeared again for one year, when one morning Goldonar appeared. Disturbed, he informed the sultaness that their father was very ill and that there was very little hope for his recuperation. She became very unsettled and rushed to Achmet to announce the sad news and to ask him to accompany her to Water City. Achmet was immediately willing to accompany his wife and her brother, especially because they promised him that he did not face the risk of drowning. As soon as the evening sun dipped into the sea, they began their journey. Little Achmet jumped ahead of them into the water, and Geldena and Goldonar kept the sultan between them so that the speed of the plunge would not frighten him. It went better than they had expected: Achmet glided happily though the tides to the gates of Water City.

But, oh, how astounded he was when he noticed that the ground beneath his feet was gold dust, the stones pearls, and that the flowers, which covered the ground abundantly, were made of growing crystals, emeralds, and amethysts. His eyes beheld a tree of gold and silver, which almost visibly grew around him. The gates to the city were made from solid gold, and as he entered, a light gleamed so brightly that he had to shield his eyes. Geldena, who until now had reveled in his wonderment, noticed that his eyes could not tolerate this radiance. She took out a small bottle and bathed his eyes in the water that flowed from it. From this moment forward, Achmet was able to gaze upon the splendor, which, until then, he could only behold from afar.

“What is that building that lies at the edge of view?” he asked.

“That is my father’s palace,” the sultaness replied, “and Goldonar has already gone ahead to let him know that we have arrived.”

With each step closer to the unique, cathedral-like building, his astonishment grew. The vaulted ceiling, which was completely made of gold, stood upon three hundred pillars of gemstones. The shaft of each pillar was made of emeralds, the capital out of diamonds, and the foot out of rubies. The beam was made up of an array of densely arranged pearls, artistically formed into symbols, complete with flower arrangements made of topaz, rubies, emeralds, and the most brilliant of diamonds. Although Achmet was one of the richest monarchs of his time and possessed a hoard

of precious treasure, he was moved by this abundance of riches and beauty and embraced his wife with profound deference; for how deep must her love for him be that she was willing to abandon this splendor and magnificence simply to be by his side? Goldonar hurried to their side and guided them to the palace where the suffering old man, who was lying on a soft sofa, stretched his arms toward them. The old mother kneeled on a luxurious carpet by the sofa, and next to her were Geldena and Achmet's children. As the sultan and his wife kneeled on this carpet, Goldonar propped up the old man. In a feeble voice, he blessed his beloved ones and then sank back lifelessly.

After Goldonar read his father his last rites and closed his eyes, he guided them all out of the room where the deceased lay and into another hall, where the finest incense was burning and from where they could hear beautiful, yet melancholic funeral music. Achmet noticed the lack of deep sorrow from both the mother and the children, and when he asked his wife about this, she replied that they viewed death as the brother of sleep, who will unite everyone in the end and that they therefore do not see a reason for mourning, as this would not revive the dead and could shorten the lives of the mourners themselves. This philosophy resonated with the sultan, and a sense of calm came over him.

The body of the deceased was burned with much pomp and circumstance, and soon after, Goldonar gave Achmet a tour inside the city. All around the palace, countless mounds of treasures and riches were displayed in great beauty and symmetry. The floor upon which they walked was covered in carpets that depicted all the riches of the world in their natural colors. He then led him into a forest, where the trees were made out of pure gold, the leaves out of silver, and the fruits out of rubies hanging like grapes from the branches.

"But Allah!" called Achmet. "I don't understand. What is the purpose of all this treasure?"

"Oh, it is of great use," answered Goldonar. "We trade them for the fruit and food items that we require from the mortal world. Because the people there are not used to our appearance, we make our trade secretly and leave these treasures for them in exchange for the disappearance of their goods."

When Achmet had seen enough of this beauty, he reminded Geldena about their return trip. She was immediately ready to go and, with her two

children in her arms, departed Water City forever. Her brother was just about to start the process of selecting a wife, a practice that Geldena had hated since childhood, owing to her own independent nature. Her old mother accompanied her, and Goldonar watched from afar with tears in his eyes as he parted with them. However, he consoled himself that very day by choosing his wife and making her the ruler of Water City and the golden palace.

Achmet and his wife cared for the old queen until her death. Their two children brought them great joy, and while Geldena sometimes would look painfully at the water, she never dove in. She did, however, allow little Achmet to visit his uncle from time to time.

1 From Anonymous, “Prinzessin Geldena aus der Wasserstadt,” in *Feen-Mährchen: Zur Unterhaltung für Freunde und Freundinnen der Feenwelt* (Braunschweig, 1801), 198–214.

Sophie Tieck Bernhardi von Knorring

Sophie Tieck Bernhardi (later Sophie von Knorring) (1775–1833) was a Romantic writer of plays, stories, novels, and poetry. In her early life, she and her brother Ludwig Tieck collaborated often in their writing. Tieck published some of her stories in his name, and although she is uncredited, she collaborated in some part with him on one of his best-known literary tales, *Der blonde Eckbert* (*The Blonde Eckbert*, 1797) (see Fischer 121). She also collaborated with her first husband, August Bernhardi, who published some of her work in his own name. After their divorce and her marriage in 1810 to her second husband, Karl Gregor von Knorring, she stopped publishing but did not stop writing. Her son, Wilhelm Bernhardi published some of her work after her death, and her letters became available in the 1960s, bringing her back into scholarship (Haberstock 13).

The tale included here, "The Deer," is from her 1802 collection *Wunderbilder und Träume in eilf Mährchen* (Wondrous scenes and dreams in eleven fairy tales). The term *Wunderbild* can be used to describe miraculous visions, such the sudden appearance of the visage of a saint in glass or in an element of nature. The tales in this collection, much like "The Deer," are dreamlike and mysterious. Like many Romantics, Bernhardi von Knorring favored fragmented stories with a meandering narrative form. As the title of the collection suggests, her tales are in some ways dreams in the guise of fairy tales. "The Deer" presents the reader, and the protagonist, with shifting images and characters who are never quite what they seem. Unlike our contemporary conception of the fairy tale, whereby the reader expects some sort of clear resolution, "The Deer" instead leaves many questions unanswered in the end.

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“The Deer” (1802)

Translated by Corrina Peet[1]

Leopold rode to the hunt. The hunters were alert behind the skittish savage; horns sounded and the barking of the dogs echoed joyfully into the forest. A beautiful deer drew Leopold deeper into the forest until he lost sight of his servants and could no long hear their horns. The tender animal continually fled from him until they finally reached a river that flowed through the forest. The deer stood on the riverbank and looked around in search of escape. Leopold was close by when it finally jumped into the noisy current and quickly disappeared from sight. The knight was still mourning this loss when he suddenly heard a loud cry for help. He looked in the direction from which the voice seemed to call, and a beautiful girl came running at full speed out of the forest, her robes, like her hair, fluttering in the wind. She stretched her arms out as her terrified eyes searched for help. Behind her came an old woman, who reached for the girl with thin arms and glared at her with terrible, glowing eyes.

The girl reached the river but did not see Leopold. She wanted to leap into the river to escape the awful thing behind her. Leopold held her back just as the old woman tried to jump on her and tear her away. He pulled out his sword and protected her from the old woman. The old woman pushed him back in an attempt to take possession of the girl, and he felt such a powerful force in his arm that he could hardly withstand it. He brandished his sword, hoping to destroy the old woman, who he thought was a witch. In the same moment, she leaped back with such great agility that he barely touched her. Then a screeching sound penetrated the air, deafening Leopold’s ears. As he collected himself, he saw that the old woman had disappeared, and a robust hunter with a long spear now stood before him. At first, he thought it was one of his hunters and wanted to speak with him, but then he noticed the terrifying, glowing eyes gazing upon him. The hunter lifted his spear threateningly, turned around, and hurried back into the forest.

Leopold now looked around for the girl, who stood shaking upon the shore. She wanted to cross to an old man who stood on the opposite side of the river. “Would you trust my protection, beautiful girl?” said Leopold. Rather than answering him, she reached her arms toward the old man. “Oh, help me come across to you,” she called. The water began to stir, and the deer that Leopold had first followed swam along the shore to the girl. She happily leaped upon its back and remained there as it carried her through the water. As the deer carried her across, Leopold observed her beautiful figure, from which her long garments dangled into the waves. Her hair hung free and flowed in rich tresses down to her hips. A crown of roses had held the locks together, but it had come free during her flight from the old woman. Now, it simply sat atop her head.

A soft wind arose, tousled her hair, and blew the crown off into the waves, which carried it to the knight who pulled it from the water. The girl had now reached the opposite shore and the old man gave her his hand, and she went with him into the forest. The deer dove back into the waves. Leopold held the crown in his hand, and as he gazed upon it, a wonderful longing began to consume his heart. “Where are you fair maiden?” he asked. “Won’t you show yourself to me again? Have I lost you forever? No,” he called out. “I must find you again. As a sign of your grace, fate gave me these flowers, which I will faithfully preserve for you.” He wanted to hide the crown at his breast when he heard loud laughter behind him. He turned around and it was the ugly old woman, who had pursued the girl in great haste. She plucked a flower out of the crown, which the knight still held in his arms, and ran away with it. A heavy pain now consumed Leopold’s soul. The crown had fallen apart, and he looked at it with silent tears. The hunting horns sounded out nearby, but he did not lift his eyes from the crown. His servants finally approached him and expressed their joy that they had finally found him after many hours of searching. He paid them no attention as his relentless tears bathed the crown of flowers.

A page, who had always been his favorite, spoke to him and asked him if he would like to return to his father’s palace, but the sad knight gave no reply and did not lift his gaze from the crown.

Finally, the servants decided to guide him on. He tolerated this without resistance and rode silently with the roses in his hands through the castle gates. The old count was quickly informed about the condition of his son

and hurried to his side, but Leopold would not answer any questions. Only when the count tried to take the roses from his hands did his son look at him with such painful, imploring eyes that no one in the room could hold back their tears. The count called for his doctor to find the reason for this illness, but because the patient gave no response, it remained a mystery to all. He simply sat staring at the flowers. Several days passed this way, and sadness began to overtake the castle—a place where joy had previously reigned. The old count was inconsolable as he witnessed the last branch of his lineage wither away with his son. They tried everything to convince him to speak. The count implored his son to tell him what might calm his heart; if he had any wish, he should name it, and told him that he would put his life and honor on the line to please him. Leopold did not answer but simply looked with a sigh at the roses. It now occurred to the count that the flowers never wilted, and he soon believed that some sorcerer must have changed his son. He therefore decided to bring him to a wise man who lived alone in the deepest part of the forest. By virtue of his piety, this man possessed power of all forms of magic, so much so that many unhappy souls had already taken solace by his side.

The old man greeted Leopold with kindness and led him into the hut, which was surrounded by a small garden filled only with rosebushes. These roses contrasted strangely with the green forest, behind which the hut and garden were hidden. Leopold observed the roses with delight and silently compared them with those he held in his hands. He laughed contentedly because his flowers boasted the more beautiful colors. The old count and the servant, who had accompanied him, took leave with tears in their eyes and left him alone with the old man. He smiled contentedly as they departed, and he sat down beneath a rosebush where he stared at his flowers. The old man distanced himself and left Leopold to his quiet contemplation.

The sun shone down upon Leopold, and as he felt its rays, he looked up to the heavens and saw the most beautiful brilliant blue. As he observed this, a soft fragrance drifted over the blue expanse and soon a silver-white cloud turned red and bloomed into a large rose in the sky. A light wind shook this ethereal flower back and forth, causing it to open up and drop its golden seeds from its center. They fell down like sparks upon Leopold’s flowers, which the rose in the sky viewed with inner pleasure, for it appeared to the rose as if the flowers the old woman had taken from him

had returned. A noise sounded from the roses below and those that had bloomed so delightfully above him disappeared. From behind the bush, he now heard a kind, female voice, which said, “Yes, once again I have escaped death, but who knows how close my enemy is while I celebrate my safety.”

“Stay calm,” whispered a male voice. “Our friend will remain by your side and none can hurt us here. It was a dreadful hunter who pursued you. His threatening eyes, his powerful hunting spear—I watched it with dread.”

“And had the young man not saved me . . .” said the female voice.

“And the river, my child,” called the male voice, “don’t forget to thank it especially.” Leopold was convinced that the girl and the old man whom he had seen in the forest were now close by. He stood up and rushed to where he had heard the voices, but he wanted to turn back in shock when he saw instead the deer that he had pursued during the hunt beneath the rosebush. An old buck sat next to the tender animal and looked at him with wide eyes.

Resounding laughter behind him brought him back to his senses. He turned around, and the old woman who had pursued the girl stood behind him and tore another flower from the crown and quickly ran away with it. When she reached the edge of the garden, he did not see her, but rather the hunter with his long spear ran into the forest. The old woman had now completely torn the crown that Leopold had so faithfully preserved. Many flowers now lay on the ground, and he held the others in his hands. The deer bent down and picked up the flowers, the buck shook its head, and the sparks from the flower in the sky fell off and landed in the grass. The deer hurried away with the flowers, and the buck slowly followed. Leopold sat down, gazed upon the flowers, which he still held in his hands, [and] looked at the sparks in the grass, and his heart was moved with a new sadness. This is how the friendly old man found him when he returned from the forest. He invited the young man into his hut, for the sun would soon set. Leopold did not hear him speak, and the old man left him alone again. The sun set and kissed the trees good-bye with its golden rays, glowed tenderly upon the roses, which soon became brighter in color, and swayed back and forth on the bushes. Leopold’s heart burned with wild desire. He looked at the flowers and pressed them to his heart and lips. The sparks within were lit up by the sun and looked back at him with pity. Tears streamed from his eyes,

and his lips parted with a loud lament. He looked to the flowers and then to heaven. “Give me that which I don’t know but that I yearn for!” he called.

He looked at the roses that were blooming on the bush, tore them wildly from their stems, and attempted to rebuild the crown. However, as soon as he tore them from the bush, they withered and the dry petals fell off. He saw that his attempt was in vain and hurried out of the garden into the forest. No overgrown shrubbery could hold him back, and the densest of branches could not contain his fury. Finally, he had gone so far astray from the beaten path of the forest that he could go no farther. He now leaned against a tree, his strength depleted. There he heard the tones of a zither, which were accompanied by a sweet voice. An unknown power now grasped his heart and transformed his anger into tender melancholy. His tears flowed, and he was so overcome by the power of the song that he kneeled down and imploringly reached his hands toward the tones. “Strike your melodic waves upon my breast and cool my torrid heart,” he called. A loud laughter rang out behind him and made him leap up. It was the old woman, and she wanted to tear yet another rose away from him. Leopold quickly hid them in his breast, and the old woman left him grumpily. He soon no longer saw her, but rather, the hunter harkened from behind a tree and pointed with his long spear into the distance toward the place from which the music had come. Once again, Leopold was overcome with a very powerful rage; the tones moved him like flickering flames, and he wanted to find her and pull out his heart so that he could be freed from his burning desire.

Now, even the bushes with their sharp thorns could not resist him any longer, and he soon pushed his way through until he reached the river where he had first laid eyes on the old woman and the girl. He remained on the shore, and his rage turned into tenderness and astonishment. A throne of roses, which bloomed beautifully and spread its sweet fragrance far and wide, floated upon the water. The waves tried to kiss the roses, and the roses tried to dive into the waves and color the water red with their fragrance.

A girl in marvelous white garments sat upon the throne; her golden hair hung in many curls, and she had a silver zither in her hand upon which she joyfully played. A deer lay upon her lap and listened to the melodies while she sang:

Woe for your glowing colors
Because the crown’s band has been broken
The fragrant spirit was lost,
And the sister roses died
Ah, lifted you in sorrow
From the green grave,
And thrust you onto the tender breast,
Where the strength of love swelled.
But your colors do not glow,
What hate severs, cannot be bound,
The fragrant spirit does not breathe:
I must suffer in longing for eternity.

Leopold noticed a bouquet of withered roses on her chest and had such tender pity for the flowers that he began to cry. He kneeled down on the shore and said, “I have suffered long enough, oh, love me, you sweet being, so that the flower of my life doesn’t wither.” The girl looked at him, then at the deer in her lap and the withered flowers upon her chest. Smiling, she took her zither and began to play again. The tender tones moved Leopold’s heart and he was lost in delight as she sang the words:

As the tender waves rock
And the purple glow of the throne,
And the Zither’s silver tone flutters
Caressing my soul:
Love’s reward waves sweetly
Yes, the tender deer’s back
Provides me a safe path,
Soothing your painful longing to come closer:
My grace should please you,
My arms embrace you.

She stood up from her seat, the deer jumped from her lap into the waves, and she stood upon its back. Her long robes hung into the water, the rose throne sank below the water, and the entire river glowed purple. Smiling, the girl looked into the water and threw the silver zither into the red waves. It swam over the current, and the water lifted it up and down. When the waves touched it, it spoke out its passion in joyful tones that trembled in the air and enflamed Leopold's heart with the hottest desire. The girl had reached the shore and came closer to the beloved who kneeled there and, out of hot desire, began to cry profusely. She dried his tears with her golden hair. He stood up to press her to his chest when loud laughter cut through the air. Leopold was suddenly aware that the old woman stood before him and that he held the deer in his arms. She looked at him and said, "Best of luck to you, dear," [and] then she pulled the black robe away from her chest, and he saw the two roses that she had stolen from him blooming on a tender white breast. He forgot the disgusting face of the old woman, the terrible glowing eyes—his senses were intoxicated, his heart enraptured by the glimpse of the beautiful breast. He rushed to her, pressed her quickly to his chest, and pressed his hot lips to hers. The old woman laughed and escaped his grasp. The hunter now stood a short distance away and waved his spear. Leopold followed him immediately, and the deer went with him, but he did not pay it any mind.

The hunter stopped in front of the entrance to the dark cave. He looked inside and said to Leopold, "All these flowers have lost their color and scent. If you re-create them, they will follow you gladly. When they all bloom with bright color again, the crown of your happiness will be complete again." The flowers bent down to the earth in front of Leopold, and the deer went into the cave and observed the flowers attentively. Leopold watched the hunter as he retreated with his spear into the woods.

"How," he asked, "can I restore your brilliance and color?"

"Only through love," replied the flowers. "Only love will make us shine and draw tender blood back into our cheeks; when she turns away from us, we must mourn and fade away."

Leopold looked at the flowers that he had from the crown. They bloomed fresh, and the sparks that had fallen from the flower in the sky glowed friendly back to him. The deer stood before him and looked at the roses with longing. As Leopold looked upon the pale flowers in the cave again,

they seemed so familiar to him, as though they were his friends who stood around him in mourning, longing for help and salvation. [He said,] “I must go now and find brilliance, fragrance and color. I must collect these things and return them to you.”

“If you can bring our beloved here,” said a small pale flower, “you need not search for fragrance and color.”

“Who is your friend?” asked Leopold.

“A butterfly,” said the flower. “She had red-and-gold painted wings and flew like the most beautiful flower in the sunshine. As she opened her eyes, she enraptured me. She approached the young flowers and kissed me, and, oh, how I wanted to unfold my petals! I blushed from this kiss and my petals turned color and glowed with love. A sweet fragrance mixed with the air, enrapturing both the humans and the fairies. When she left me, my grief caused me to pale again. A sweet scent no longer filled the air, and I was brought into this cave. I now hope that you will relieve me of my grief and free me from my longing.”

Leopold listened with earnestness, and the fate of the flower became very important to him. He looked at him and said, “Your unhappiness has moved me with deep pity. I want to find your friend and when I have found her, I will bring her to you.”

“I will accompany you,” said the flower, and in the same moment, he was no longer in the cave but rather woven into the crown that Leopold kept at his breast. He looked at the other flowers and said, “So, you have the intention to blend with my fresh flowers.” The flowers bent over, and in a few moments, the cave was empty.

Leopold looked at his crown, which was now entirely woven closed because the pale flowers had braided themselves within. “Oh, you, picture of my life,” he said to the crown as the beautiful blooming roses intertwined with the pale roses, “so remains the harsh suffering close to my blessed hours.” With these words, he opened his eyes and saw that the old woman was standing across from him. “Don’t lose yourself in idle observations,” she said. “You must hurry if you want to acquire the flowers again.”

“What should I do?” asked Leopold.

“Follow me,” said the old woman. In that moment, the woman disappeared, and the hunter stood at a distance, waving him on with his

spear. Leopold immediately followed, and the hunter lead him though the dark forest. When they reached the edge of the forest, the hunter disappeared. Leopold saw a wide expanse before him, in the middle of which stood a small tower made of the finest stone lattice. Full of wonder, he moved closer to it and noticed that it was a prison, which detained a beautiful gold butterfly, and many others that were not quite as beautiful, as well as a large number of bees. Leopold took the crown from his breast and looked at it. The flowers that he had taken from the cave were mourning sadly and sighed quietly. When the bees and the butterflies noticed this, they tried hard to break through the lattice and flapped their wings in fear, so much so that the beloved was overcome with pity and wanted to free the prisoners. It seemed that it should be easy to destroy such a thinly braided prison—Leopold did not believe that he would even need his sword. He moved toward the tower in order to help his friend, but he had hardly touched the prison when the ground near him opened up and a small man leaped out. He held a lyre in his arms and began to play it. Leopold had hardly noticed the tones when he saw armed fighters quickly approaching him. The flowers shook, and the fearful butterflies and bees tried to hide themselves. The young knight drew his sword. The armed men pushed toward him while the old man played cheerfully. The brighter the tones sounded, the braver and nimbler the fighters became. More and more rushed toward Leopold, so many that Leopold could not defend himself for much longer. “If I must lose my life here,” he called, “it should be by the hand of a single brave man, not by the art of a cursed sorcerer who pits such a large number of men against me!” The old man didn’t stir but continued to play a new melody. Suddenly, Leopold noticed a great flock of horses running swiftly across the field toward the battleground. His heart now burned with rage, and he wished to either meet his death or kill the treacherous old man. He raised his sword toward the sorcerer, who tried to leap away. However, Leopold hit his instrument, and it smashed with a loud clang and fell to the ground. The old man gazed upon it for a moment and then sank into the earth. The warriors looked toward the old man and also immediately disappeared. Leopold briefly fell deaf from the loud clang, but as he came to his senses, he turned to approach the prison in order to free the prisoners. The tower that they had encircled was no longer there. A garden full of lovely flowers that glowed beautiful colors and radiated sweet fragrances now stood before his eyes. The bees and the butterflies

frolicked in the grass at the foot of the flowers. Leopold wanted to enter the garden but was held back by some force. Soon a magnificent palace appeared before his eyes, hiding the garden. Leopold pulled the crown from his breast. The withered flowers had disappeared, and all his roses had been braided into the crown; only the two flowers that the old woman had stolen were still missing. The palace gates opened, and a richly dressed servant appeared, bowed with honor toward Leopold, and invited him, in the name of his kingdom, to enter and take rest. It was like a dream. With the crown in hand, Leopold followed the servant to a richly decorated hall. The servant had hardly taken his leave from the young count when another door opened and a tall man of magnificent appearance entered. In his hand, he carried a silver spear, and with his other hand, he led into the room a woman whose black curls were braided with many precious gems. She wore a dark-colored dress, and upon her most beautiful breast were two roses, which Leopold immediately recognized as his own. Her fiery eyes were far brighter than the gleam of the precious stones in her hair. As the pair entered, they were followed by a flock of young men and women led by a young man in splendid red robes with golden stitching and who held the hand of a very beautiful girl. All the young men and women bowed honorably before the man with the spear and the woman in the dark robes as they ascended their thrones across from Leopold. The young men and women stood to either side.

As Leopold observed this scene, the often-seen hunter seemed to appear within the servant. Soon he recognized in this same man the wizard to whom his father had taken him, the old man who had awaited the girl on the riverbank, and even the buck that had been next to the deer in the garden. The lady seemed to be the old woman who had stolen his roses. The young men and women became immediately recognizable as the butterflies and bees. He also had no doubt that the beautiful girl, whom the man in red had led into the room, was the small tender flower that caused deep longing in him.

As Leopold observed everything, he heard the tones of a zither, and as its sound reached his ear, love and longing awoke in his breast. He looked upon his crown of roses and the tears flowed from his eyes upon it. At that very moment, he once again saw all the glowing sparks from the sky that had shaken out of the crown. The door opened again, and the girl in the white dress with golden locks and silver zither in her hands entered the

room accompanied by the deer. The old man stood up from his throne in anger and looked at the animal with a threatening demeanor. The woman stood up and said, “Hail, my hunter, do you wish to continue to linger?” The man swung his spear and struck down the deer. The woman quickly took a rose from her breast and dipped it into the blood that spilled from the deer’s wound. Immediately, a beautiful girl stood before their eyes.

“Thank you, my father,” she said to the old man. “You have finally released me from my disgrace, and I will now rush to my mother’s side.”

He turned to the woman and said, “Your revenge is finally reconciled. You have forgiven your husband for giving his love to a tender fairy and for being disloyal to you. You have rescinded my forced subservience to you, and you have dipped the flower of love into the wounds. The balmy breath of the flower has healed us, and now my heart turns in love to you and your daughter.”

As they spoke these words, she embraced the girl, and it was revealed to all eyes. The woman took the crown from Leopold’s hands and braided the two roses into it. She then set it upon the girl’s head and said, “With this crown you lost your peace, I return it to you now and bestow upon you the hand of the man who stole your heart and flowers.” With these words, she placed Leopold’s hand into the girl’s and embraced them both tenderly.

The old man approached and said, “I also give you my consent and blessing.” Leopold recognized the man well—he was the same sorcerer whom he had met with his father. He was so overcome with joy that he could now call the girl his own that he asked neither who she nor her parents were.

The young men and women came closer to him and asked, “Do you recognize us? We are the butterflies and bees and the small flowers, and we are related to you.”

“I recognized you immediately,” said Leopold.

“We were transformed instantly when our master parted from his wife,” they said. “We were and remain full of love, and therefore we took only the one form, but when our master and mistress disunited, they had to yield to fate, and when hate and love, fear and jealousy, distrust and betrayal, unfolded within them, they had to expose themselves immediately. And when the passion moved from the bosom of one into the other, they no longer possessed their true forms, and suffered, as did the people.”

Leopold was about to speak with his new relatives when loud music rang out and the young men and women began to dance. Even Leopold flew through the rows with his beautiful bride. When finally exhausted in every way, the tired Leopold was shown to his chamber where he fell into a deep, gentle sleep.

In the morning, he awoke astounded that the servants, the palace, his bride, and everything that had enchanted him the day before had disappeared. He looked around and found himself under a shady tree not far from the gate of his father's palace. He looked upon it, and everything he had experienced until that moment seemed as though it had been a dream. He stood up to go to his father, but then, in the blue sky above him, a figure in the form of a rose drifted above upon a light fragrance. He observed the thin white cloud, but it didn't turn red, and he could not resist the sorrow that overcame his heart. As he stood there, his father's gate opened up, and he saw the count come out and look around. The page, who had been Leopold's favorite, accompanied him.

"My son has not arrived yet," sighed the count.

The page saw Leopold and hurried happily to his side. "Greetings, my dear sir," he said while kissing his hand.

Leopold went to his father and greeted him.

"So I see you are happy and healthy again, my dear son," said the count, and took him into his arms. "Come in and greet your bride."

"My bride?" asked Leopold.

"Yes," said his father. "My friend and brother-in-arms stayed with me during your absence. His beautiful daughter, who accompanied him, informed me that you had recovered from all the dark magic and that you would return to me today. On his way to me, he spoke with the pious man with whom I entrusted you, and his words consoled me. He also offered you the hand of his lovely daughter so follow me and embrace your bride."

Leopold followed his father in silence—he could not speak a word. As he entered the familiar hall, his astonishment turned into the utmost happiness. The old man with the spear approached him and led the beautiful girl with the rose crown in her hair to him. "Take my daughter and be happy with her," he said. Leopold embraced his beloved with delight. He did not reveal to his father that he already knew the old man and the girl; he didn't know

how to explain that an unseen power had held his lips, and the old count and his brother-in-arms celebrated the marriage of their children with the greatest revelry.

1 From Sophie Tieck Bernhardi, “Der Reh,” in *Wunderbilder und Träume in Eilf Mährchen* (Königsberg: Friedrich Nicolovius, 1802), 255–88.

Caroline de la Motte Fouqué

Caroline de la Motte Fouqué (1773–1831) was one of the most prolific women writers of the Romantic period. She wrote more than twenty novels and published fairy tales, realistic stories, essays, plays, and poetry. She was married to Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, who was best known for his fairy-tale novella *Undine* (ca. 1811), and some of her writing has been mistakenly attributed to her husband. Like *Undine*, Fouqué's early Romantic tales were translated into English early on, and she was included among other popular German writers, such as Benedikte Naubert, in English collections of German Romantic fiction. In the latter half of her career, Fouqué was publicly thought to be conservative and not politically motivated, but Karin Baumgartner makes the case in *Public Voices* (2009) that Fouqué's position as a conservative gave her the freedom to write what she liked as long as it related to the private sphere. In this way, Baumgartner demonstrates that Fouqué could express controversial opinions about the role of women in society without drawing attention to herself.

"The Tears" was one of Fouqué's earliest published stories and appeared in 1806 with two other tales in a collection titled *Drei Mährchen* (Three Fairy Tales) under the pseudonym Serena. Although Fouqué moved away from fantastic themes in her later writings, her earliest writings were heavily influenced by fairy tales. "The Tears" is similar to other literary fairy tales in the period, such as Goethe's "Das Märchen" ("The Fairy Tale"), which were highly symbolic and often allegorical, describing dreamlike otherworlds. In some ways, the tale appears to be based on the trope of a young man falling in love with otherworldly women, but uniquely the tale focuses on a mother-son relationship rather than a romantic one.

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“The Tears” (1806)

Translated by Julie L. J. Koehler[1]

The queen rested on the slope of an ancient cliff. Long shadows slanted down from above and played strange games with the two children at her feet, who quietly watched over their mother’s sleep. Animals and plants listened from afar; everything breathed softly in a quiet, mysterious way. Then, suddenly, a bright glow spread across the peaks of the cliff.

“Do you see,” whispered Luzina, “the silver veil that adorns the old stone? Let’s go fetch it for mother, who is missing it.”[2] Livio quickly flew toward the stones without paying heed to Luzina. Luzina climbed the dark paths in complete terror, finding her brother nowhere. Finally, she saw him. He bowed before a female form, who bent her face above him and expressed the unspeakable in the sweetest pantomime. He spread his tiny arms lovingly toward the woman, she kissed him on the forehead, and they both pushed up through the air like a glowing cloud. Luzina watched him sadly. “Poor Livio,” she cried, “who will play with you now and accompany your lively songs! Oh, and our mother, how could you forget her!”

She quietly climbed down the cliffs and wept heartily for her brother. But it was as if the path had no end, and the cliffs became ever more terrifying. She often had to go through narrow caverns, where the sound of the river scared her, for she had not noticed it before. As she got closer and ever closer to the water, the black waves hit the cliffs with a horrible violence that threatened to pull her in. Terrified, she sat down in the protruding stones and called to the sleeping queen.

Mother, can you abandon me!
Look death seeks to capture me!
Lost under the dark masses
must I shiver and turn pale;

Can you let sleep hold you fast forever
Deaf to your child’s fearful calls
As the waves entangle her,
And with wild froth claim her?

Does my call not have angel’s wings;
Do I struggle here in vain?
Stone wants for me to succeed
And appeal to your cold heart.

With these words, a tear fell upon the stone. A blue flame sprang up into the sky, strangely turned, and was lost in Luzina’s bosom. Then it pulsed and carried on through her tender limbs. Ivy shot out around her limbs, and a wonderous flower bloomed. In the flower all the colors of the heavens played, and a glowing chalice was concealed therein. Then, out of the cliffs, these words could be heard:

Linger, linger on this awful chasm
We the spirits together in union
Dwell here in the nightly hours.

Linger, linger until the day
When every lament is stilled,
And this dark saga resolves:

That love stirs in the stones,
Water and fire,
Fire glows in heavenly light.
Linger, linger till the hour
When the spirits together in union
End their nightly rounds.

Livio was swept far away into the heavens, unconscious owing to the gaze of his seductress who had pulled him away. Full of love, she rested with him. She kissed his rosy cheeks, tousled his hair, and entertained herself, playing with the golden ringlets that rested on her breast. His eyes were glued covetously on the glowing veil that flowed from her like a current of light. The light unfolded around him and before he knew it surrounded him in the form of a glittering temple.

“Orianda!” called thousands of voices, and the sound rose in an unending vibrating wave to the dome, where the voices trailed off into a long, level tone. This tone produced a sun that filled the building with a wonderous glow. Livio looked around, stunned. All around he saw what he thought was flowing silver. Pillars, walls, and floors shone with the same material. As often as he moved, it was as if he were carried by these waves. Slowly he floated through the halls, and as he touched the pillars, melancholy tones poured out of them. These sounds drifted around him and disquieted him. He had already lost all memory of his past, but they stirred a yearning in him and awoke a very distressing fear. Without knowing why, he felt a sudden need to seek the exit of the temple. As he neared the walls alone, they gave way and moved farther back, so he wandered around in circles and could not catch them.

“Now,” he called out painfully, “so keep me, you ever-shifting floods,” and the poor thing threw himself outspread toward them and a cross built beneath him.

“Orianda!” rang out in the heights and the depths. “What do you seek?” called a soft voice to his side.

“That which I do not know” he replied, without moving his head.

“Look around you,” she said. “Perhaps you will find it.” He looked up and Orianda stood before him. She stood alone noble and radiant. All remaining light died out and on the dark walls marvelous forms appeared. A line of dwarves engaged her, and they all crowded colorfully around one another. The most beautiful and marvelous of them lingered and entangled her, but her kiss became a poisonous breath, and they suddenly collapsed. Streams of blood and tears saturated the halls, and death finally brought them all to an end. “Set me free,” shouted Livio, wanting to rush into the convoluted web.

In that moment, everything disappeared. He floated as before with Orianda on an aromatic cloud. They quietly approached the earth. The silver veil stretched out over blooming aloe plants, where colorful birds played, amusing Livio with their colored grandeur. Orianda lowered him softly down onto the grass. “So long, sweet child,” she said. “You wished it so, your will is free.” She kissed him once and disappeared.

He quickly arose from the earth, a beautiful, hale young man. At his feet lay rich weapons and clothes, and soon a servant approached atop a black steed, which led a beautiful white horse with a red-and-gold bridle. Livio swung up onto the horse right away. Nothing seemed strange to him; nothing shocked him. In each activity, he was strong and deft. The horse rose under him and shook his beautiful head, as if he wanted him to carry him back in the air. “Stay still, my sleek Floriant,” said Livio, and softly stroked him. “Carry me to the colorful world, where the joy of a thousand eyes beckons us.” Full of an inner passion, he sprang into flight. “Where are you leading me?” he called out to his servant.

“Wherever you desire to be led,” he answered. In that moment, they approached a small forest, which was enclosed by a dainty trellis. From within these words were heard:

Your sweet breath softly carries,
And touches the meadow as a gentle breeze
Like a dream or a ghost
Following your fleeting traces.

So you make the green branches sway
And breathe and weave this sweet picture
That shows me the light of the future,
A dream of a golden cloud welling up

A flowered gable shall catch me.
I nest in the sweet air.
You tauntingly kiss my lips and cheeks,
And lay coolly upon my breast.

Livio at last leaped over the trellis and followed the voice, which led him through the flowered path to a fresh grassy lawn on which a beautiful maiden sang under the fruit trees. He had left his horse with his servant at the entrance to the forest and now stood before the beauty without anything that could make noise or announce him. A green-and-gold embroidered robe flowed down from his shoulders, and his blond locks bounced freely at his temples. Like a lighted cloud, his joyful face observed her. “Where do you come from, beautiful stranger?” she asked him after a short silence.

“Your singing has called me from afar,” he responded sweetly.

“You are a sweet picture from a dream,” she said, and gestured him closer. Then the trees bowed to her and shook golden fruit into her apron. She handed oranges and juicy figs to him. Her pleasure drew him in more than anything. “You are mine,” she said suddenly. “Now come to Alfiaris, the lord of this island. I am his daughter and can bring you unending joy. You will like passing time in his court, where taking joy in life’s pleasures is as easy as breathing.” She now led him along a flowered path to a palace, whose golden roof glowed brightly in the far distance. Livio’s eyes held fast first to his beautiful guide, then to the new magnificence of the palace before him. Suddenly a white deer jumped out from a bush and ran anxiously here and there, then stood before him as if it wanted to say something to him. Livio wanted to catch the strange animal, but every time he approached his escort, the deer jumped back into the brush. Finally, they reached the entrance to the palace. As Livio went to enter through the gate, the deer appeared next to him and let out a loud cry when Alinda wrapped her lily-white arm around him and pulled him in with her caress. Livio turned at the sound and saw the deer jump from a nearby bridge into a spring. After he entered the palace, a row of splendid rooms led him through to a lighted hall that was filled with a thousand young men and women who were busy with full glasses and richly adorned tables. In the middle of the crowd stood a man with a most beautiful appearance. In front of him, a boy bounced and poured a colorful shimmer out over all the beings, and when he touched a silver harp, joyful sounds played out. The woman, Alinda, approached them, and as she nestled in the beautiful man’s chest, she said, “See, Father, what a guest I have brought to you.” Alfiaris reached toward Livio with a friendly hand and commanded that he be brought wine and food.

“Come,” he said. “Many are waiting to have the pleasure of greeting you.” He led him to the rows of dancers. They crowded around him [and] joked and laughed and drank to health of the newcomer. Alinda was all love and joy. She told of new fests and grand hunts that Alfiaris had planned and told him to prepare for the joyous delirium of the coming days. Everything she spoke of was accompanied by great movement in her face and body. She never stayed in one spot, and waved first to one and then to another, and took in everything she saw with joy and pleasure. Her delicate fingers played unceasingly with the flowers and colored gems that adorned her hair and bosom, and waved to her father, who happily looked at her and moved through the colorful rows to her hand. Playfully, she now stepped toward Livio with laughing eyes, to bring him a crystal glass full of red wine. Her lips touched him, and the fleeting kiss rushed through him like a soft shower. He watched her, and a deep longing burned in his dark eyes. Alfiaris wandered over to them, and the boy pulled the harp’s strings. Alinda pushed away from him, and he lost her in the sweetest noise.

The following morning, the sound of horns called them to the hunt. In the front court of the palace, glittering hunters and steeds swarmed about. The hunters mounted the horses and followed Alfiaris. Alfiaris led the procession atop a yellow-golden horse from which rich panels hung. And before him stood the boy, playing many joyful tunes, until they reached the forest and chased the wild game around for many hours.

Livio gave himself up to this entertainment in the fresh air. He trotted across the fresh lawn and was amused by everything he saw around him. The game jumped in front of him and lured the lively hunters, who appeared like individual flowers through the green brush. In the distance, the horn sounded from time to time, and also the voice of the boy could be heard again, and the whole forest surged with colors and sounds. Alinda busied herself with finding a place to rest and cool off. She and her entourage approached a sky-blue tent whose entrance was held up by two silver columns encrusted in precious stones. The soft notes of a flute greeted the guests, as if it wanted to prepare their excited nerves for quieter delights. Fruit and delicacies sat all around in the most dainty vessels. Just as Livio was about to settle himself beside his beloved, she joyfully called out, “The deer, the white deer! O! How I want to have it.” Everyone rushed out, and each tried different methods of catching it. Livio saw it right in front of him but could not catch it in that moment. With growing

annoyance, he followed it for a long time through the forest. It led him down confusing, dark paths. He felt exhausted and was ready to return empty-handed when he suddenly found himself in a beautiful field, and he recognized it right away as the place where he first saw Alinda. He remained standing for a moment and reflected; then he heard a soft rustling. He looked around and saw Alinda in the arms of a beautiful stranger. “Unfortunate for you,” he said angrily, and went to stab his sword into the man’s chest. But as the iron touched the red blood, everything around him dissolved into a dark and gray fog.

He could not find his way for a long time, but then the voice of his servant called to him, and Floriant stomped the earth impatiently. He turned himself around and rode on gratefully, without noticing that mountains and impassable steppes now rose about him. He came up to a wide river, over which he could take neither bridge nor ferry. Isolated gray meadows bent down to the naked shore, where the sun burned unbearably hot on the dry sand. There was no exit anywhere. Full of pain and discomfort, Livio threw himself to the earth and would forget his suffering in sleep. He dreamed of many strange things. It was to him as if he had to pull the sword out of Alinda another time, but then it wasn’t Alinda but rather a young man with whom he was seized in a battle. The young man held out his shield, on which Livio recognized his own face. Powerless, he let his arms sink and kissed his opponent on the chest and soon felt a painful burning, which led him to rush into the waves to cool it. Hideous creatures peeked out of the water alone and floated toward him fearfully. Then it was, when a blue stream touched Livio, the young man bowed before him smiling, in his changed countenance, and Livio recognized the picture on his shield and opened his arms to the young man. Then familiar tones awoke him. He heard the words:

Has the old majesty sunken,
Burned out by the light of the sun;
Insultingly treading on my delight,
Desire is drowning in its own desire?

Should I play here in the barren meadows

with the rotting ruins;
Light shines through deep darkness,
But does my song ring out unheard?

Gray shadows appear below,
Smiling in the bitter sorrow.
Yes, I feel a shower of joy,
As you experience my songs.

What course is intertwined in these times,
Dirt lies in dark grounds.
The stream should extinguish the joy
as the sound insists upon

Softly I quiet my strings,
Traces singing through the shadows;
Light and sound are mating with each other
Wilting and blossoming in time.

When he saw it, he recognized the boy from Alfiaris's palace, who sang his strange little song on fallen walls. "Welcome," said the little one, and rushed toward him joyfully. "I want to escort you over the river that you have feared for so long." With these words, he let his strings sound, and Floriant carried his lord lightly across the water. The mute servant followed him as always with an unchanging face. Livio observed him for the first time with careful attention. It appeared to him as if he had seen these processions once before. Unique memories flew over him: the figures in Orianda's temple, his own horrific, cold death. Everything played out like a dream before him. During this, the boy floated on the waves playing, until they reached the shore on the other side. "Follow me in good trust," he said when Livio saw, stunned, that he hastened to a thick impassable forest that the high shoreline had hidden. He obeyed with reluctance. The boy had hardly touched the wild undergrowth when a path was leveled, and the

forest and earth lit up joyfully. The child played and told many funny stories, jumped from horse to horse, and especially enjoyed teasing the grumpy servant, who looked at the ground the entire time. Soon they reached the top of a hill, on the back side of which leaned an old, fallen building. A man in full armor stood at the entrance to the building, with sword pointed north. When the boy went over to him, the knight turned his head and looked down at him kindly. They went now through the long, dark hallways until they came to an inner court in the middle of which a great sword lay on a white stone, with the tip also pointing north. When Livio gripped it and swung in the air with joy, tiny sparks fell to the earth, out of which sprang an assembly of armed men. Harp tones played out in the court and wandered to a strong iron gate that, cracking, sprang open at their touch. Therein, a young man with golden armor and a helmet plume the color of fire rested at the feet of a black column. Livio thought at first that he saw an unmoving flame, but as he neared him, he recognized the young man from his dream.

“Greetings,” Livio called out, and rushed toward him with open arms. Then the young man turned on him, tore his sword away from him, and rushed out to be with his troops.

“Let him go,” said the boy. “You will soon meet each other again. Stroll quietly down your path and see what you should find. I have to leave you now. Take this hair that you so often let play in the wind; it will give a clear sound and lead me to you.”

Livio saw him disappear with the castle and the forest and found himself on a wide level plain alone with his servant. From far off, the sounds of the harp rang out and appeared to show him the path that he should choose. An irresistible longing pulled him toward the fire-colored knight.

“I must embrace him,” he said, and rode out into the vast distance.

“Yes, you must,” replied his servant, who had ridden beside Livio. The servant looked back at him and was smiling for the first time. He [Livio] wanted to answer him, when he saw the deer led by a group of small misshapen old men. A distorted creature with a long white beard that fell like jagged metal to the earth pulled the deer with heavy bindings. The deer looked at Livio wistfully and let these words come forward:

The curse will never release me!

Has the tender flower
That had blossomed for me in endless glory
sank into evil’s power?

Erring now in bitter pain,
Searching for traces of my beloved
I hurried weeping through the meadows
In the trappings of an animal.

Love made me make a mistake!
For speechless, I saw speechless every heart
freeze with deep pain
And hate passionately enflamed.

And the bitter taste
When the enemy’s bindings hold me fast
Powerless I see, oh the shame,
How the curse taunts my dear one.

Livio felt a tremor inside him. Angrily, he rushed toward the childlike old one, who pushed him from side to side with angry moves and jerked the tormented animal here and there. Seeing the animal’s need, Livio no longer thought of his [own] pain. He was struggling with all his energy to free the beloved deer when the fiery knight rushed in with his troops and jerked his sword toward the dwarf.

Then, suddenly a monstrous mass of stones towered from one side of the cliffs to the other. Livio and the knight stood alone on the naked peak of the cliff, staring at each other. They recognized each other and had involuntarily opened their arms to embrace when death suddenly stepped between them and touched the knight. He sank lifeless to the earth.

Livio recognized this grim companion. He thought of the boy and how his hair floated in the air, and he heard harp tones suddenly—the boy floated toward death, and he melted away like puff of air and left only a

dark trace on the horizon. Then everything became still again, and the boy quickly passed by.

In the interior of the cliffs, Livio believed he heard strange whisperings. He searched in vain for a sign of human life. His unease was growing with each passing moment when he found a lone flower under the craggy bluffs. The flower pointed its silent face to the sky and pulled the sky's light into her. The blossom opened ever wider and wider. Joyfully, he pulled it toward him; the play of the bright colors held his eyes fast. It was as if he saw back into his childhood—all the pain, all the worry, disappeared, releasing the bindings on his heart one by one until his feelings flowed like a river and tears poured from his eyes. This sweet thaw watered the flower.

Then he heard a clear tone; the glowing blossom pushed up like a star and twinkled above him in the sky. How he saw it, his own face beamed out like on the shield of the knight. The flower had turned her petals outward, and bright floods poured out of her, like smoke out of a crystal pipe, and in a mirror of the stars, the light surged here and there. Water wet the cliffs, coating the steep heights. Grass and flowers sprouted out of the stones and crowned the waterfall, which appeared like a diamond in the middle of the cliffs. Out of the crevices in the earth, these words could be heard:

We the ghosts all in union;
Close our nightly patrol;
The wound has bloomed;
The morning hour glows anew.

Ever more waves poured onto the cliffs, and joyfully more life stretched out across them. Soon Livio saw the trees pushing up out of the rigid corners of the cliffs, and in their treetops, little birds swayed. Golden snakes played in the grass, lively game leaped about, and everything breathed new life. Then he heard the harp in the distance, and as the sound neared, a heavenly creature rose up out of the water.

"Luzina!" he called, running and sinking at her feet. The boy watched them from the branches, and the flowers softly whispered and murmured. It was then they heard the name of the queen. Livio thought of the deer. He saw a lovely face, with pained eyes that rested on him, and his mother

appeared before him again. Ensnared by these appearances, he followed Luzina automatically and entered the grove where they had left the queen sleeping. Here, she now sat on a throne of roses and violets, Alfiaris at her side. The boy and Alinda, who became a child again, played with flowers and animals. “Come now,” called the mother. “I greet you, Livio, as my son, even if that is not exactly true. The one who bore you is not here in order to close the circle.” In that moment, a wonderous glow spread out, and Orianda suddenly stood among them. The veil lit up like a crown of sun rays and she spoke:

I come down out of the heavenly Azure,
To deliver the light of love to earth,
Full of pain I saw the conflict that ruled down here
Broke out hateful, hostile natures.

I masked the light trails of my son.
The yearning that had called him into being,
A flame that had to be cooled in bitter grief,
And night and death devastated the blooming meadows

But the dark resolved itself into delight,
The sweet pearls of your tears flowed out in a gentle thaw
And the meadows and fields drank the heavenly glow again.

The son is unveiled on the throne of the sky
And flowers and fruit spring out of the earth anew
Creating a freshly woven crown.

1 From Caroline de la Motte Fouqué, “Die Thränen,” in *Drei Mährchen* (Berlin: Ludwig Wilhelm Wittich, 1806), 131–62.

2 The name is written as “Luzine” in German. It has been adjusted here to reflect the German pronunciation.

Frau Lehnhardt and Bettina von Arnim

Bettina von Arnim (1785–1859) is known for the semiautobio-graphical epistolary novels that she wrote in the latter part of her life, after the passing of her husband, Achim von Arnim. What is less well known is the work she did with fairy tales in the early part of her life. She wrote her own fairy tales, her first creative work. One, "Der Königssohn" (The Prince) was scheduled to be published in the Heidelberg Romantic journal *Zeitung für Einsiedler* (Journal for Hermits), but the paper folded before this could happen. In addition, she worked on two of the most important collections of the period. Her brother Clemens Brentano and future husband, Achim von Arnim, were working on a collection of ballads that would result in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (*The Boy's Magic Horn: Old German Songs*, 1805), and her friends Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were collecting stories for the first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*, 1812). Arnim assisted with both these endeavors and all the seven large editions of *Children's and Household Tales* were dedicated to her.

In this period, the Grimms, Arnim, and Brentano became interested in recording the stories of a woman known only as Frau Lehnhardt who had been the nursemaid of their professor and adviser, Friedrich Carl von Savigny.[1] Unfortunately, nothing more than this is known about Frau Lehnhardt, not even her first name. Savigny wrote the Grimms in 1808, informing them that Lehnhardt had stories to share and was growing ill (see Rölleke 226). In the same period, Brentano and Achim von Arnim were also interested in seeing if Lehnhardt had a contribution for *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. The two groups collaborated to meet with Frau Lehnhardt while she still lived. Achim von Arnim wrote to then Bettina Brentano, explaining that the Grimms had written him about Frau Lehnhardt and hoped that he might be able to visit her. In his letter to Bettina, Achim von Arnim wrote that he recognized "the holy treasure that conceals itself within Frau Lehnhardt. . . . Oh, if only I were a good mountain climber and miner, I would carve these fairy tales out of her."[2] Achim von Arnim's

words demonstrate a larger assumption, from himself as well as the Grimms and other collectors in the period, that female storytellers were mere vessels of culture or passive resources to be mined.

Bettina von Arnim appears to have pushed back against this conception of the female storyteller. She writes to Achim von Arnim, explaining how she "had pestered Frau Lehnhardt a few times about the little stories."[3] Here, Bettina von Arnim treats Frau Lehnhardt as the respected authority from whom Bettina von Arnim seeks a favor rather than merely as a source to be accessed. The story that she collected from Frau Lehnhardt, "Hans ohne Bart" ("Beardless Hans") is not represented as the perfect treasure Achim von Arnim described either. From her notes, it appears that Lehnhardt shared a story but could not remember the ending and offered a possibility, to which Bettina von Arnim offered her opinion of a different ending. The story cannot, therefore, reside as a perfect whole in the vessel of Frau Lehnhardt. Instead, Lehnhardt is able to improvise and creatively apply an ending that may work. This is a more realistic representation of how the work of folklore gets done, but not a scenario that fits comfortably into nineteenth-century conceptions of authorship. This may be why the tale wasn't included in either the *Children's and Household Tales* or *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, or perhaps the content may have been a little too unusual for either collection. Nonetheless, it is a good example of how women who recorded tales treated their tellers differently.

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1 Frau Lehnhardt's name is spelled a number of ways, including Lehnhardt, Lenhard, and Lenhart, and she is sometimes referred to in the feminine, Lehnhardtin and Lenhardin. I use Lehnhardt in my discussion.

2 "den heimlichen Schatz, der in der Frau Lehnhardtin verborgen. . . . O wäre ich ein guter Bergknappe und -steiger um diese Kindermärchen aus ihr loszuhauen" (Ludwig Achim von Arnim, "Ludwig Achim von Arnim to Bettina von Arnim, April 2, 1808" 1:198).

3 "die Frau Lenhart, welche schon mehrmal, wegen der Mährlein, geplagt hatte" (Rölleke 226).

“Beardless Hans” (1808)

By Frau Lehnhardt (Collected by Bettina von Arnim)[1]

Translated by Julie L. J. Koehler

There once was a poor woman who had a son. She could not nourish him with food because of her poverty, so she had to nurse him from her breast until he was seven years old. Then she says to him, “Go out into the forest and shake a tree. If you can pull it out of the ground, then you must go out into the world, for I am poor and cannot give you anything to eat.”[2] The son went into the forest and wanted to shake a tree, but he couldn’t. So he went back home and says to his mother, “I cannot shake a tree.” So the mother took him back to her breast, until seven more years had passed. Then she sent him again into the forest and says, “Take a tree by its branches and shake it with great violence. If you can pull the tree out of the ground, then go out and live your life, for I am poor and cannot provide for you.” So the son goes into forest, as his mother told him to, and comes back home, dragging a large bough with him. He says, “Mother, I cannot pull a tree out of the ground, but here is a bough that I have pulled off.” Then the woman takes him again to nurse until seven more years passed. Then she sends him again into the forest, so he shall see if he can tear a tree out of the ground and shall go out into the world in order to earn his bread. “Grab it by the roots and pull mightily,” she says to him. The son does as his mother said to and pulled a strong tree up out of the ground by the roots. So he goes on farther into the woods and never comes home again.

In the same forest was a mill, which wasn’t safe, for no mill worker wanted to stay there, and those who stayed were murdered. Hans finds this mill, and therein was a widow, for her husband was also killed. He speaks to this woman and tells her that he wants to work the mill for her, without pay, only for food. Thereafter, the woman was quite happy and says yes, but Hans wanted her to promise him that no one other than himself was allowed to serve her, and if there were others, that he would be allowed to beat

them. The woman was content with this, for she thought he would likely want to go when he noticed the ghosts. She cooks him a soup to eat right away, but Hans throws the soup in the fire and says he wants to cook one himself. He puts a large flounder in water on the stove, gathers all the bread there is, and breaks it into the soup. Then he takes a meat hook, in place of a spoon, and guzzles it all down. Watching this makes the woman's hair stand on end, and she fears that he would eat her out of house and home if he remained living. She sends him into the mill that evening so he can grind the wheat, and she hopes the ghosts will kill him.

As midnight approached, there comes three mischievous will-o'-the-wisps in the mill, and they want to strangle him to death. But he grabs one and throws it under the millstone and grinds a piece of his stomach and sends him home. When it was morning, the miller's wife is amazed that he is still alive. She sends him back to the mill in the evening and thinks he ought to die that night. But when midnight arrived, and the will o' the wisps came, he then grabs two of them and throws them under the millstone and grinds the limbs of one and the back of the other.

In the morning, he says to the miller's wife, "Do you have nothing else for me to do? I ground all the grain." The woman sends him into the forest, since it was wood day, so he could gather wood. He takes the woman's four fine stallions and hitches them up to the wagon and drives into the forest. He was the first on the path, so the other farmers had to wait for him. He had no tool for cutting down the trees, but instead he rips them out by the roots. The wagon was too heavy, however, and the horses couldn't pull it, so he beat one after the other until they were dead and threw each one into the wagon on top of the wood. When he had beaten them all to death, he went farther into the forest and made a great mound so that the farmers could not gather any wood, and then he pulled the wagon home himself. When the woman came and saw him with the four dead horses, she was afraid and locked the gate. He threw the wagon over the walls, though, trees and horses and all, and he threw the woman into the house. The miller's wife was then so afraid that she sent him to a hollow where she knew the devil lived. She said he should fetch an herb for her.

Now Frau Lehnhardt doesn't know how it goes on. She thinks that it ends with a treasure-seeking story, in which the devil gives him a lot of money

and he goes back to the miller's wife with it and asks forgiveness for his bad manners. I like it best that he always catches the will-o'-the-wisps.

1 From Bettina von Arnim, "Hans ohne Bart," *Achim von Arnim und die ihm nahe standen: Achim von Arnim und Bettina Brentano*, ed. Reinhold Steig (Stuttgart: Verlag der J. G. Cotta'schen Buchhandlung, 1913), 2:144–46.

2 The tense of the story switches between the simple past and the present tense. This may represent Arnim's recording style (the simple past is used almost exclusively in written German) or the colloquial nature of how Frau Lehnhardt told the story.

Dortchen Wild Grimm

Born Henriette Dorothea Wild (1793–1867), Dortchen Wild Grimm was among the group of young women from whom Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm gathered a good portion of their tales. The Wild family, together with the Haxthausens and Hassenpflugs, contributed more than one hundred tales to the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*). Dortchen Wild Grimm provided at least a dozen tales, including several well-loved tales such as "Rumpelstiltskin," "Fitcher's Bird," and "Frau Holle." Dortchen Wild married Wilhelm Grimm in 1825, becoming Dortchen Wild Grimm. Her son, Herman Grimm, would marry Gisela von Arnim, another author in this collection.

The tale included here, "The Three Little Men in the Wood," belongs to a tale type called the Kind and Unkind Girls, which includes the Grimms' "Frau Holle" and French tales like "The Fairies" by Charles Perrault as well as the "The Enchantments of Eloquence" by Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier. The version included here is from the first 1812 edition of *Children's and Household Tales* and was based on Wild's account. In later editions, the Grimms significantly changed the tale, incorporating additional elements from other sources. Whereas the original 1812 version from Wild represents reward and punishment as being based on a character's inner worth and good or bad intentions, the Grimms' modifications construe reward and punishment as issuing from a character's actions or inaction. In Wild's version, the three men reward the kind girl for simply giving a kind greeting, but the unkind sister is punished without the opportunity to act, for the men see her evil heart and wish bad things on her. In the 1819 edition, however, the three little men ask each of the girls to share her breakfast with them and then give her a broom and ask her to sweep their back porch. When the kind sister complies, she finds the strawberries. The unkind sister rudely refuses to do either, which leads to her punishment. These modifications more clearly foreground a moral lesson and point to the Grimms' shifting notion of audience for the collection, from academics to children. Reproducing the tale here with the attribution given to Dortchen

Wild Grimm is a way of recognizing women storytellers as authors and producers of tales; they were not simply passive receptacles from whom tale traditions could be collected by male editors.

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“The Three Little Men in the Wood” (1812)

Translated by Julie L. J. Koehler[1]

A man whose wife had died was indecisive as to whether or not he should take another. Finally, he took off his boot, which had a hole in the sole, and said to his daughter, his only child, “take this boot, carry it across the floor. You will find a large nail, hang it upon the nail. Then fetch some water and pour it in. If it holds the water, then I will take another wife; if the water flows out, then let me remain as I am.” The girl did as she was told; the water, however, sealed the hole together and the boot remained full to the top. The man looked himself to make sure it was right; then he said, “Therefore, I must certainly take a wife.” He went and married a widow. She also brought a daughter from her first husband into the home. When the new wife saw that her stepchild was beautiful and was loved by all, and that her daughter was ugly by comparison, she became jealous, and focused on this, and thought only of how she could torture the girl.

Once in the middle of winter, when the snow lay high, she sewed a dress of thin paper, and when it was done, she called to her stepchild and said, “I want to eat strawberries, so put this dress on, go into the wood and find me a basketful; and you may not come back in the house before you have a full basket!”

The girl cried bitterly and said, “In the winter, no strawberries grow in the wood, and even if they did, they would lie under the snow—how should I find them? And it is so cold outside that breath freezes; how can I go in this paper dress through which the wind will blow and that thorns could tear off me?”

“Speak not another word more,” said the mother, “and go right outside and find the strawberries.” In her jealous heart, however, she thought that the girl would freeze to death outside and never come home, which is why she had made the thin paper dress.

The girl was obedient, however, and she put on the dress, went into the wood, even though she could see nothing but snow, and there was not even the tiniest blade of green to be seen. She went on farther, and when she came to the middle of the wood, there she saw a little house from which three little men peeked. She said good day to them, and because she greeted them so politely, they asked her what she was looking for in a light paper dress in the wintertime in the wood. “Alas,” said she, “I am to find a basketful of strawberries, and I am not allowed to return home until I can bring it with me.”

The three little men said to her, “Go behind our house and move the snow away, there is a treasure full, and they are grown; there you will find them fully ripe.” The girl thanked them and did as they asked. While she moved the snow away, and picked the strawberries, the three little men said to one another, “What should we give her for being so polite and so beautiful?” Then one said to the other, “I grant her that she will become even more beautiful”; the next said, “I grant her that whenever she speaks, golden ducats shall fall from her mouth”; and the third said, “I grant her that a king will come and marry her.” When the girl came back, they gave her all this, and when she went to thank them, ducats fell from her mouth. Then she went home and amazed her stepmother with the strawberries that she brought and amazed her even more when the stepmother saw how the ducats fell from her mouth. It was not long after this that a king came and took her away, and made her his bride.

The mother thought, however, that she wanted her daughter to also procure such great fortune. So she sewed her a practical skirt lined with fur and told her to go out in the wood and ask the little men for a gift. The men, however, saw that she had an evil heart, and instead of good gifts, they gave her bad ones: the first, that she would freeze in her fur-lined skirt as though it were made of paper; the second, that she would grow fouler every day; and the third, that she would die an unfortunate death. Shivering from the frost, she came home and told her mother what happened to her, and the mother saw that the curses were beginning to become true and thought only of revenge. She went to her stepdaughter, the queen, and presented herself in a friendly and affectionate manner, and so the queen took her in and gave her her own apartment at the palace. Soon thereafter, the queen gave birth to a little prince, and when she was alone in the night, and was still sick and weak, the evil stepmother and her daughter lifted her out of the bed, took

her out to the river, and threw her in. The next morning, the stepmother told the king that the queen had died in the night.

Illustration by Arthur Rackham. From Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, eds, “The Three Little Men in the Wood,” in *“Little Brother & Little Sister” and Other Tales by the Brothers Grimm* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1917).

The following night, a kitchen boy saw how a duck swam up through the gutters of the kitchen. The duck asked him:

“How do my guests?”

He answered:

“They are taking their rests.”

“And how does my little child?”

“He sleeps in his crib so mild.”

Then she went up in the form of the queen and nursed her child, cared for him, made his bed, tucked him in, and swam away in the morning back through the gutters as a duck. She came the next night in the same manner, and on the third night, she said to the kitchen boy, “Go to the king and tell him he should take his sword and swing it from the threshold three times over me.” The kitchen boy went and told the king, and when the king swung the sword three times, there stood the queen before him, alive and well. The lies of her stepmother and stepsister came out that day, and they were fed to the wild animals of the wood.

1 From Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, eds., “Die drei Männlein im Walde,” in *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1812), 43–47.

Karoline Stahl

Karoline Dumpf (1776–1837), married name Stahl, was born in Gut Ohlenhof, in the historic Baltic region of Livonia in 1776 and grew up in the German upper class of this Russian province.[1] She worked as a governess for several decades in Livonia, Russia, White Russia (present-day Belarus), and the German states. In the early nineteenth century, she began to publish stories in newspapers and soon published her first collection of children's stories, *Fabeln, Mährchen und Erzählungen für Kinder* (Fables, Fairy Tales, and Stories for Children) in 1818.[2] In addition to collections of fairy tales, she also published several instructive readers, including *Scherz und Ernst: Ein Lesebuch für die Jugend* (Jest and Seriousness: A Reader for Youth, 1822).

The aim of Stahl's tales for children was both to entertain and teach important lessons. This speaks to her use of the tales as a governess, a common profession for unmarried women in the middle and upper classes. Her works are generally considered didactic, and her name came to be associated with a list of sins that upper-class children should avoid: "superstition, vanity, making fun, flattery, chattiness, quarreling, arrogance, lying, and snacking."[3] Stahl reframed and adapted French tales for a German audience, and she experimented with motifs drawn from both French and German traditions. While the Grimms admired her work, believing her tales were "for the most part fairy tales gathered from true oral tradition," they nonetheless judged her writing to be "not very good, but nice and simple and without embellishment."[4]

"Princess Elmina" foregrounds Madame d'Aulnoy's influence in Stahl's tales. The character of the false princess and the mix-up with the bottle are reminiscent of d'Aulnoy's "The Blue Bird," on the one hand, and "Beauty with the Golden Hair," on the other. Unlike d'Aulnoy, however, Stahl depicts upper-class culture and court life as problematic, owing to their frivolous nature. The main character, Elmina, avoids the dangers of upper-class values because she was raised by a poor woman in the woods. Her

counterpart at court has been corrupted by an overemphasis on physical beauty and fashion. Elmina is not only beautiful without a beautifying tonic, but also, in Stahl's depiction, because her appearance is more natural, it is more beautiful. Also, the tale does not end with heterosexual romance but rather with a reunion with a parent, another trope Stahl uses fairly often. Although her tales are written for younger children, her morals are relevant for girls and women of any age, showing that focusing a young girl's beauty and ambition on winning a husband alone is what leads to vain and selfish young women.

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1 She is sometimes called Caroline Stahl.

2 Other tales from this collection by Stahl have been translated into English by Shawn Jarvis, including "The Godmothers," appearing in *The Queen's Mirror*, and "The Wicked Sisters and the Good One," published in *Marvels & Tales*.

3 "Aberglauben, Eitelkeit. Spottsucht, Schmeichelei, Geschwätzigkeit, Streit, Übermut, Lügenhaftigkeit und Naschhaftigkeit" (Uther 1147).

4 "großenteils echte, aus mündlicher Überlieferung gesammelte Märchen . . . nicht ausgezeichnet, aber doch einfach und ohne Überladung" (Grimm, *Kinder-und Hausmärchen: Jubiläumsausgabe* 345).

“Princess Elmina” (1818)

Translated by Julie L. J. Koehler[1]

Once upon a time, there was a queen, who was so unlucky that she had given her dearly beloved daughter to a wet nurse who was an evil woman. The queen lavished the nurse with kind deeds, but this did not stop the evil woman from carrying out the plan she had devised. She swapped the little princess with her own child, who was only a few weeks older. In order to completely ensure her plan’s success, she carried the little princess Elmina into a great, thick forest and threw her in, to be a meal for the bears and wolves.[2] A poor woman, who lived in a little hut not far from that spot, heard the child cry. She went toward the cry and came just in time to save the child from her impending death. Soon after, Elmina won the woman’s love, since the little one was quite friendly and amenable. So she grew up there, and the poor woman, who was quite wise, educated Elmina in all that she knew. After a period of time, the good old woman became sick, and she knew that the hour of her death approached, so she called for Elmina. She returned to her the clothing that Elmina had been wearing when she was found and told her that she was not, as Elmina had till now believed, the old woman’s daughter. Then she gave her some useful advice for the future, and died. Elmina wept heavily and buried her. Then she lived for a little while longer in the little house in the woods all alone.

When it was winter again, and she sat lonely and abandoned through the long, dark evenings, she became afraid and longed to be among other people again, whom she assumed would be good to her as her adopted mother had been. She left on a stormy night while the wolves howled loudly along the path. After a long while, she finally made her way out of the woods and found a small lane that she followed a long way toward the open country. Soon she stood amazed before a small village. So many houses together, it was a glorious sight! In comparison to her little forest hut, the farmhouses looked so large that she thought she had landed in a city

full of palaces. She greeted a passing farm woman with great reverence but did not have the courage to ask if she could stay the night. Finally, she met some children, and they led her to the house of their parents, who took her in.

Elmina was nimble and easy to teach, and could spin and knit well, but she still could do nothing right by the farmer's wife who often scolded her. The poor child took this right to heart and often cried bitterly. Once, while she was herding geese along the road, a coach rolled by. A lady sitting within saw the little girl weeping and asked the driver to stop. She called to Elmina and asked her the reason for her tears. "Listen, my child," she said as Elmina explained her situation, "call the woman to me here, and I will speak with her." So Elmina went and brought the farm woman. The lady explained that she felt the farm woman was causing the poor girl distress, but the woman took it very poorly and fired Elmina on the spot, saying that the little brat had complained too much. The farm woman then took the geese herself and led them home, and commanded Elmina to fetch her small pack and get out. The lady, shocked that she had caused this unexpected outcome, called to Elmina to take a place in the coach.

Now, this lady was not the most generous of women, and she regretted taking on the extra burden of Elmina. Then she thought of a way out. She allowed Elmina to put together an outfit from some of the lady's discarded dresses. Once Elmina was dressed up in the latest fashions, the lady presented her to the queen and said she thought it would bring the young princess joy to have an attendant of her own age. The princess was, however, a vain and evil creature. She teased Elmina awfully, especially since, though they were both same age, she found that her attendant was prettier than she. The princess washed with a tonic that was supposed to increase the coloring and beauty of the skin, but Elmina washed only with well water and bloomed fresher and more beautiful than her mistress each day. The princess asked the evil nursemaid for advice. The nursemaid told her to fetch a crystal bottle that looked exactly like the one that the princess used to hold her facial tonic, and then she should fill it with nitric acid. When she next saw Elmina, the princess presented the bottle as a gift so that Elmina might also enjoy the beautifying tonic. Elmina took it gratefully, and her vanity was flattered by the prospect of increasing her beauty. On the same day, however, a chamber maid accidentally broke one of the princess's bottles. She secretly took Elmina's bottle and replaced the broken one in the

cabinet. When the princess went to wash, her nursemaid noticed that it was not the beautifying tonic and raised the alarm. Elmina was assumed guilty of swapping the bottles, and she was to be immediately sent away. With tears in her eyes, Elmina gathered her belongings in order to go. The princess had also lied to the queen and told her that Elmina had stolen from her, and since the queen had been missing an expensive ring, she thought that perhaps Elmina could be the one who had taken it. So she gave the order that before she could leave, the thief should be brought to the throne.

The poor girl presented her meager belongings with faith, confidence, and courage. Within these belongings was the clothing that the old woman had found Elmina in as a baby. How astonished the queen was at this evidence. She immediately had her lord call the wicked nursemaid of whom nothing kind could be said, in order for her to face judgment for the evil act. So, to the great joy of the royal pair and the entire court, Elmina and the daughter of the nursemaid were swapped back into their original places. The evil woman was sentenced to death, and her daughter was exiled. Elmina, however, was and remained always as good as she had been in lower standing.

1 From Karoline Stahl, “Prinzessin Elmine,” in *Fabeln, Mährchen und Erzählungen für Kinder* (Nuremberg, 1821), 34–39.

2 The name in the original text is Elmine. It has been changed to Elmina to reflect the German pronunciation.

Adele Schopenhauer

Adele Schopenhauer (1797–1849) lived and worked among a group of intelligent and creative women in Bonn, which included Ottilie von Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's daughter-in-law and editor; Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, arguably one of the greatest German writers of the nineteenth century; and the archaeologist Sibylle Mertens-Schaafhausen, who became Schopenhauer's lover after the death of Mertens-Schaafhausen's husband.

Schopenhauer included the "The Forest Fairy Tale" in her first published collection, *Haus-, Wald- und Feldmärchen* (House, Forest, and Field Fairy Tales) in 1844. The tale demonstrates the conflict between the oral tales of women and the editorial hand of men, a conflict we also witness in the history of Bettina von Arnim's "Beardless Hans." Schopenhauer's own history put her in an interesting position to reflect on this relationship. Her estranged brother, Arthur Schopenhauer, the famous philosopher, held problematic theories about the role of women, whom he felt were evolutionarily inferior to men. In "The Forest Fairy Tale," Schopenhauer addresses tensions between well-respected male authors and women who serve as their inspiration. The tale exhibits themes of authorship, gender, and class and engages in metanarrative strategies to foreground the practices of men in the period who collected stories from women, often without credit or permission. Schopenhauer's other works include *Anna: Ein Roman aus der nächsten Vergangenheit* (Anna: A Novel from the Most Recent Past, 1845) and *Eine dänische Geschichte* (A Danish Story, 1848). She was also known for her paper-cut silhouettes, one of which is included in this selection.

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“The Forest Fairy Tale” (1844)

Translated by Julie L. J. Koehler[1]

The reading came to an end.

“Excellent!” said the professor. The author bowed to him and to the rest of the society who sat in a wide circle around him, and he folded up the manuscript.

“A delicious fairy tale! Charming! Very original!” the ladies affirmed. The hostess thanked the author; the author thanked the ladies.

“A fairy tale?” asked a young man. “I would have taken it as more of an allegory.”

“Now,” replied an old maid, “is a fairy tale anything more than something colorful, than a magical tinted glass, through which we catch a glimpse of the known world? And is this not a form of allegory?”

“Ahh,” said the young man. “I would think of it differently.”

“Above all,” spoke the courteous critic, “there is an unfathomable depth of charm in the conception of this fairy tale and its far-off blue magic mountain.”

“Friend,” replied the poet, “a fairy tale is always . . . the blue flower that reveals to us this blue wonder.”[2]

“I would think of it differently,” the young man repeated to them. “I think the fairy tale draws from strange ways of life that exist outside the composition of our own human life.”

“This queer principle would lead to a one-sided view,” muttered the professor.

“I don’t understand a single word of that,” said a handsome young man—he was the son of the house—“I think instead, it is with the *fairy tale* as with love, which also cannot properly be defined by wise men; everyone thinks of it as something else. But”—he stepped toward me and turned to a

few young people—“please come with me into the next room, where my sister Linda sits with the children who are not allowed into the parlor and is also telling a fairy tale. ‘The Forest Fairy Tale,’ or ‘The Fairy Tale of the Spring,’ what do I know? Perhaps there is another fairy tale in there.” He laughed with his friends.

We continued our discussion and moved into the next room where a young lady was sitting among the children, telling a story.

“But what in the world is ‘The Fairy Tale of the Spring’?” I asked.[3]

“You don’t know? You really don’t know?” called out the children in confusion. “I will tell you.”

“No, no I will!” yelled another.

“Out there!” One pointed. “All the way in the back of the garden is a small, a very small well, and Aunt Linda can speak with it.”

“I have often heard it,” affirmed Cecilia, her hand on her heart. “Me too! Me too!” said the others. “And what the well told her, she told all of us.”

“Yes,” said Edmund very seriously, “and when the story of the well begins, there were little violets under the leaves and they listened too, and the little blades of grass sharpened their green ears. And the butterfly folded his colorful tailcoat behind him, and sat down—do you see, like so!” And he sat down like a butterfly. “And then, yes, then came the fluttering, clumsy dragonfly, who never gives a care about being orderly; and the bee in her honeycomb busies herself quietly for she would like to listen as the spring, but she doesn’t allow herself time for relaxing in the evening, for she is far too concerned with the housekeeping and then—”

“And?” I asked amused, “what does the spring say?”

“Oh! First the long golden sunbeams lay out in the evening over the creek, and the mosquitoes dance there until they’re tired, and then it becomes so still, so very still. The glowworms light their lanterns, and the spring begins his fairy tale.”

“And what is this beautiful tale like?”

“Aye, it is something else entirely but also very familiar; you see, it is a family tale; one that we experience more and more, and it is the most beautiful—it has absolutely no end. First there is an old, ancient ancestor in the forest, an elf, who lives in the hollows of the oaks and is older and much cleverer than the little people around you here.”

“He is also much bigger,” said Jenny.

“Indeed,” responded Otto, “but he was not always so smart. He once did something very bad; he offended the gnomes, who wanted to climb on his roots, which rose out of the earth.”

“Yes, and the gnomes were not bad spirits; they were the little folk who had an agreement with the count who owned the land on which the oak stood. They wanted to bring his daughter a wedding gift and leave a little house spirit with her, who should have brought her good luck.”

“And watched over her children,” said Jenny.

“Yes, but she had no children, but that comes much later.”

“And so the earth spirits couldn’t bring her their blessing?”

“No, and the family became impoverished, and all the children of the house withered away and died so that their line completely ended.”

“Now there is an old law,” said the oldest boy, taking on the story, “that the nature spirits are not allowed to willfully harm a living being, and especially not humans. And when the count and his incredibly beautiful daughter Sismonda and all her siblings, and all their children, thereby died and wilted like the grass of the fields, the elf was punished: he lost his voice and could never again leave that tree.”

“He had to pass this torment in silence,” continued Edmund, “while under him his beautiful humans, those he loved, and especially the nobility, offended nature and committed injustices against each other. But he sat in his tree, he could not warn them, at least not in words. A hunter came by one day who was very overconfident and shot the spritely wild game; this sickened the elf, he rustled the branches, which is something he could do. ‘A fresh morning wind today,’ said the hunter. And readied his hunting dog. One day, bad boys came and took some nests away, mangling the hatchlings. He made the oak’s boughs groan. ‘How the old wood creaks,’ laughed the boys. ‘It will soon make good firewood.’ The worst, however, was the story with the woodsman’s apprentice.”

“I will tell that one,” cried Otto.

“No, no, auntie should,” cried the little ones. “The dear, dear story with the woodsman’s apprentice!” they begged.

And the good aunt began to recount:

There once was a powerful line of counts who owned the land on which the old oak tree stood, though none of them remained living. A young man from Hungary came to the land and hired himself out as a woodsman's apprentice. A distant cousin to the counts, the young man had inherited the deed to the forest and now owned it. The old woodsman was a stubborn, hard man and he neglected everything in his care that didn't come directly before his eyes, completing only the most essential tasks. He could not bear his new apprentice, Elmrich. Elmrich was nimble, active, and lighthearted. He did the essential tasks last, for he loved the beauty and wonder in the forest. He attended to and preserved every flower on the ridge and took joy in the youngest sapling, though it was slim and fresh and so dainty that it swayed to and fro in the breath of the wind like a fair maiden. Thereby he took care of the alder, aspens, and birches before all others. He also loved to hunt but shot only the old and clever wildlife, against whom he had to battle a bit. His favorite was the wild boar, but he fed the young does. He tamed them easily and conversed with them often for hours. By all accounts, he was a dreamer who would happily spend the entire day in a reverie, sitting and often meditating for hours. He wore old timber on his feet and sat out in the blue yonder.

It was strange. The young fellow was joyful but also a daydreamer, and he was often forgetful of his tasks. And yet from the moment that he came into its service, the forest began to grow and to thrive like never before. Never had so many flowers bloomed among the moss and the ferns. The grass on the glade had never been so thick and green, and the trees had never been crowned with such an unbelievably beautiful canopy. It was as if the sun shone warmer wherever he stepped, so everything miraculously thrived all around him. Elmrich did not pay attention to this. He was accustomed to surrendering himself fully to the moment and to his calling —or to dreaming and doing nothing at all. In his dreams, however, he did not think about the woods. He dreamed of grand parties in shining gold castles, of beautiful women and countless guests, of horses and sparkling jewels, of velvet and pearls, but not of the white swaying birches, not of the green velvet of the grass on which he lay, not of the dew drops, which like pearls hung from the colorful petals of the primroses.

One day, when he was lying in the wood and giving himself over to his thoughts, plagued by an inner resentment, he began to complain aloud. "Why," he said, "am I a foundling, an orphan child, who never knew his

parents? Perhaps my father is not a poor countryman or villager. He could be rich and noble—and perhaps he weeps warm tears over his son who was stolen away from him. When the hunter saw me rising high into the clouds in the claws of a vulture, and he shot the evil beast down with his rifle, the evil thief fell to the ground with his bundle in his claws. Then perhaps my far-off parents wept over their lost child, searched for me, and finally took me for dead. And my inheritance went instead to some strange hand, and my line was broken, and my name disappeared off the face of the earth. But it is not broken, and lives on in me and pushes me constantly back toward the path that I unknowingly left? Alas, that I must be a poor, poor apprentice!”

While he spoke of this, the old oak began to sway strangely over his head, and the branches rustled, and it was like they were answering his lament. Yes, it appeared to him as though the bows dipped down toward him, and immediately his light and joyful pluck returned to him, and he looked up to the heights and said to the tree cheerfully, “Are you taking my side, old friend? I thank you that you should have so much feeling for a poor child of man. Certainly, your green canopy that you arch so beautifully over me is more beautiful than one made of velvet, and the true golden sunlight passes through it! Therefore, are you so beautiful, you old forest wig, that I have come to believe that you always mean well by me?” And the good old oak rustled and rustled and rustled ever more loudly. “Curious!” thought the forester, “that absolutely no wind blows!” He looked hard at the oak, and then a little branch with three leaves fell in front of him, and the spot from where the branch had fallen appeared for a moment to the hunter as though a pair of brown eyes were looking at him. When he looked again, however, it was only the shadows of the leaves. So he took the little branch, stuck it in his hat, and laughed. “Thank you so much, old friend! And may God give you a sunny day!” And then he went back to his work.

The oak tree, or rather the elf within the tree, was then very moved and saddened. He had personally known the vulture of whom the hunter spoke, and a cuckoo that often came and went with a finch that lived in the tree’s branches had told him how the evil raptor had taken a child from a sleeping attendant in a far-off village and that he was the last count’s firstborn son. The poor father came back with his wife, childless, from their long trip to Hungary. In the village, it was forbidden to speak of it, and they hoped for a

new heir. But when the beautiful countess Sismonda became pregnant again and bore another little lord, the poor little boy died in the first days after his birth. The count could not bear the heartache for long, and he and his wife both died young, and the fief fell into other hands. The vulture's treacherous ingratitude toward the count, whom the good oak considered in some measure his own brethren, had deeply aggrieved and angered the tree. Now that he saw the handsome heir lie fresh and healthy in his shadow, he thought only of his current luck and all the seeking and scheming he could do to help him bring him back to his father's countship and inheritance. And perhaps along the way he hoped that through this service, his speech would be returned to him and he would no longer have to listen, annoyed, to the long, secret whisperings of the grass that grew at his feet, which spoke so quietly that not even the violets next to them could hear.

If only the elf were allowed to leave the oak now that he had a purpose. He could, however, still advise the lanky hunter and wordlessly succeed. Although he could not visit his daughter who lived all around the beautiful alder, birch, and aspen trees, he could send her messages via the small finches.

Under this earnest contemplation, the day passed to evening, and the night took all under her dark cloak. There came three wandering will-o'-the-wisps dancing through the forest, searching for a spot to pass the night. Unfortunately, though, the singing folk were also lured into the swamp as they came home from drinking, because each one mistook the will-o'-the-wisp for his godfather's lantern. The will-o'-the-wisps made their way before the oak and gave their reverence by taking their flames off and carefully letting them flutter around in the air for a bit before they put them back on again. This was their way of politely asking the oak if they might take up quarters there for the night.

Although the oak was not allowed to speak any more in a human way, he still had a certain way of making himself understood to nature spirits, such as the three will o' the wisps. He permitted them to rest their feet against his side, and gave them the proper refreshment so that they could make their lighting fresh and bright again. Finally, he told them of the tragic fate of the young Elmrich and gave them the core of the tale with the request that they should attempt from their end to make the young count understand who he is. "It is sad," thought the oak, "that I must share this important enterprise

with all this riffraff, and with the cuckoo, who is no more secure than man, but regardless I will speak with them, for I have to believe that I still belong to the Elf-Queen's community."

Elmrich no longer thought about his former sorrow, for he had been taken with the forester's beautiful daughter, whom everyone called the Forest Rose, and she appeared to not take offense. When he had asked her once, however, if she could perhaps suffer his attentions, she had responded that she liked the apprentice quite a bit but that she was still far too young to think of anyone in a serious way and preferred to think of colorful ribbons rather than treasures of the forest. Her father, however, was a dark sort of person, and everything was too colorful in comparison to him. Therefore, they did not speak to each other anymore, for her father had a heavy hand! Whenever they met each other, however, Elmrich kissed a rosebud that he always wore in his buttonhole, and Forest Rose would laugh. She knew it meant that he would like to give her a kiss. Rose took a green spray and tucked it into her hair, and that meant "not until I am your bride!"

A few days later, the poor Elmrich bitterly lamented under the oak that there was no nearby town with a holy church. There was however a sort of annual fair that was coming up, and the good young man was looking forward to it. His coins burned in pocket, and as soon as he could, he was secretly off to the fair in order to buy Rose the most beautiful, colorful ribbons. "She will surely now think of me," he thought. Heavens help him, this thought came before everything else.

The old grumpy woodsman, meanwhile, had for some time detected poachers in the forest but did not have the resolve to catch them or the desire to bring serious reprimands against them for the mischief they caused. Therefore, these rogues became so bold that they ventured into a shed very near the woodsman's house. In the shed, food was left for wild game to eat in the hard wintertime so the game would not starve. A bell was hung on the entrance to the shed for the purpose of alerting the game to the food. A night came in which there was a bright moonshine, such that one could clearly distinguish the shed, and the wild thieves thought all the hunters as well as the nearby farmers were off to the fair. Elmrich, as the youngest of the house, should have remained, but he was delayed with his purchases. The rogues decided to ring the bell for the wild game and thought the old habit would drive them there, although the animals were

now full and food was aplenty. It went as expected; with the clang of the bell, a buck approached and walked proudly to the feeding trough. The rascals let him take the food in peace, for they were hoping for an even better prize. Then they heard cracking and breaking of branches in the thick bushes, as if a great red deer buck were approaching with his herd, and they crowded around the back of the roof and laid down.

“I’ve got you now, fellas!” thundered someone behind them, and suddenly standing in the middle of them was the old woodsman. He grabbed the nearest one, threw him to the floor, and pulled the trigger of his rifle. The old man had stayed back from the fair with a runny nose and as he opened the window for fresh air, he suddenly heard the soft sound of the feeding bell in the wind. He listened closely, and it rang again, and then, since he was already half-dressed, it was only a few moments before he was standing before the rogues, and the first shot threw the buck to the ground in surprise.

The woodman was alone, however, and the thieves were three. The fearless woodsman hadn’t considered this, and his anger overtook his good judgment. He grabbed the first awestruck man, dragged him to the front, placed his foot on his chest, and threatened to shoot him if the others would not give themselves up. The poachers had only a scattergun, whose shot they had saved for the buck. The other rogues were startled and quickly fled, when the woodsman allowed his trembling and teeth-chattering prisoner to stand up and commanded him to get out while he pointed his loaded rifle at him. Unfortunately, he forgot himself and began making his wild threats, saying that now all the others would come and the entire robber’s gang would be done for in a moment, and they would force him to reveal the hiding place of his compatriots, and so on.

The two other rogues, who had fled, had gone only a few steps away, and they noticed that the woodsman remained alone, none of his people had followed him, and they began to suspect his speech was just blowing smoke. So while hiding in the brush, they shot at the woodsman. Alas, he heard the rustling and turned to look, so the bullet went into his heart and the old man sank to the ground.

In this moment, Elmrich was returning. He saw the rogues running through the forest, but they disappeared into the trees just like the deer. As he neared the shed, he hoped he might discover the culprit’s tracks, but

instead he found the dead woodsman. Horrifically shocked, he tried everything within his power to revive him and called as loudly as he could for help—but all in vain!

Dawn was gradually breaking, and the day began to color the treetops—then the remaining folks from the fair started to make their way back. Elmrich heard them and called out to them. But alas! Instead of believing him at his word, they thought he was hiding the truth that he was the murderer, and they took him to the town authorities. Here, he was to be held in a dungeon of the castle, a sort of storage room, until later, for there were two very rough thieves that sat in the actual prison. They did not want to let him go until he could be formally interrogated, which wouldn't be until the following day, since there was a break for the holiday.

There, the poor fool lay in an untidy room full of strange, stored items and, since the strength of the door was not to be trusted, his arms were tied behind his back. The day outside was sunny, clear, and joyous, but he sat alone, dejected and miserable, on a hard stove bench and stared longingly through the barred window at the fresh, cheery forest. His courage had fallen, and he was reflecting on the possibility that he could prove his innocence when he heard the clear words "Trust in God! Trust in God!" next to him. It came from a pious quail, who looked back at him through the broken pane of glass. He looked at her with friendly thanks and thought, "Good animal, I have shot some of your nearest relatives with my shotgun—however, that shall not happen again when I think of your comforting words!" And with that he stretched himself out on the stove bench in order sleep for a bit.

As he relaxed, his eyes fell upon the three oak leaves that the old oak had given him and that he had stuck in his hat, which was lying next to him. He considered them carefully. A parasitical oak apple[4] had affixed itself to one. "Ach," he thought, "in the same way, somewhere, strangers feast on my property and build their homes. I can't take it!" On the second leaf was a strangely formed yellow fleck. "See," he thought, "I have a birthmark in the exact same shape on my left upper arm!" The third leaf was fresh and green. A little ladybug sat on it. "Bring me luck!" he sighed, and "pray for me to your good lady."[5] And with that he finally fell asleep.

When he awoke, the thick ropes that had bound him were lying next to him on the ground. A mouse had chewed threw them! Joyfully, he jumped

up and ran to the window, from which a fragrant, warm breeze blew—a rose branch bowed through the window and thereon sat a rose hip that looked just like a royal orb, and next to it was a blooming rose.

“Quite right!” thought the hunter. “If I were a king and not just a ruling count, I would soon free my little Rose and make her a rose queen! But alas —”

“Cuckoo!” called someone next to him.

“Cuckoo!” he answered. “Yes, my good bird, I have never so often cuckooed!”

“Cuckoo!” answered the bird.

“Where to, then, my clever friend?” asked the apprentice. Then a magpie flew into his room between the iron bars and flew into the corner and landed on an old shrine. There he sat and called “Cuckoo!” yet again.

He knew this magpie. She was tame and the old forester had fed her daily. “Poor animal,” called Elmrich, “you have also lost your master!”

The magpie pecked at the closet with his long beak and finally pulled a paper through the crack with much effort.

“Cuckoo!” called the bird at the window.

“Truly,” thought the hunter, “you good animal treat me like a relative, and we are still here in the forest. You lighten my loneliness and imprisonment! I thank you!” And then he stooped down and picked the paper up off the ground.

“Oh,” he said, “this is also a tree, but a painted one. A shame that I can’t see properly, as it has grown dark, and they will come fetch me away before dawn to take me away to the city courthouse. And my poor girl will not have the colorful ribbons that still lie in my bag from the fair. Oh, such grief and heartache.”

Just then a light shone through the window. “Who is it?” asked the apprentice.

There stood three bright will-o’-the-wisps perfectly still next to one another, as though they wanted to give him light, and the bird loudly called “cuckoo” beside his neck.

“Should I read it?” Elmrich laughed.

“Read, read, read!” echoed throughout the entire forest.

“I think I’m dreaming,” thought Elmrich. He walked toward the window anyhow and held out the paper. It was a copy of the count’s family tree. He followed carefully from generation to generation, from ancestor to descendant, and didn’t notice why the old names so bewitchingly drew him in. The three will-o’-the-wisps continued to light it for him. When they were, however, very weak and tired, since standing still is against their very nature, the old oak sent countless masses of glowworms and fireflies, who set themselves in thick rows across the bars of the window and practically built a candelabra.

Far-off farmers, however, who came out of the pubs and saw the strange lights, crossed themselves and spoke the Lord’s Prayer, for it appeared to be a sign that something greater was at work.

“Holy Mother of God!” said Elmrich. “So this really true? It says here that the oldest child of the count was snatched by vulture on a trip to Hungary—and that’s me! And I’m the count and the heir to all this land, and this birthmark on my arm is how one will recognize me as the lost one, just like the oak leaf! And here I sit imprisoned in my own castle.” In that moment, morning began to break, and guards came in to take him away.

As Elmrich walked out, the magpie and the cuckoo flew with him so that the evidence would be right on hand. The town authorities quickly recognized his innocence, for among the bushes and trees of the forest, one could see many, many footprints, not just the apprentice’s, and it was clear that there were several people present at the death of the woodsman. Also, the buck had been shot and taken away with the other witnesses. Moreover, one had found no flint at the arrest of Elmrich, and the deadly bullet did not match Elmrich’s Hungarian weapon.

So he was told that the suspicions against him were dropped, and the authorities thanked him and asked if they do anything for him. So he told them his own strange story and showed them the family tree and the birthmarks on his upper arm, and the magpie and cuckoo called to them to investigate the situation. Since there were now questions, wonderings, and assurances without end, the young count had to return to his cell in the late evening where he would wait until authorities in Hungary could be written to, and the confirmation of what he had said could come to be. A group of men escorted him back to the jail. The magpie and cuckoo flew over his head, and the entire path was lit by the three will-o’-the-wisps. Rose stood

waiting by the door, sprang toward him, threw her arms around his neck, and said, sobbing, “I knew that you were no murderer.”

“Cuckoo, cuckoo,” called the clever birds.

Observers noticed that during his voluntary imprisonment, the prisoner was not always completely alone and that Forest Rose had found ways to cheer him up. Also, one may have noticed that she was often seen playing with the colorful ribbons, although her father had not allowed her to wear them.

Finally, the sent-for servant arrived from Hungary. He was the local authority on the situation and on the birthmark, which had once been seen as unlucky. He brought all the necessary items, a whole great wagon full of documents about the vulture’s kidnapping, the young heir’s disappearance, and about the physical features by which one could recognize the little boy if he should be found again. For from the first moment of the pain of death, the late count had taken all the necessary steps to ensure that his little son would inherit the entire countship in the event of his demise, and everything had been confirmed and sealed in his hand.

The village community happily recognized the friendly young lord. His relations, however, who had grown fat on the goods of his land, like the gall apple, would not waiver but rather insisted on remaining and came up with everything possible and impossible against him.

Soon, however, the entire forest began to grieve. Young trees buckled from the ruckus, old strong branches broke like husks, as the grass withered in the burning heat, and then the stream overflowed and rose above the hay, and the forest birds no longer sang and flew away in the opposite direction. Then, finally, the evil cousins gave in and gave the young count his due.

And so it came to be that the heir was restored to all his old rights. At the ceremony of homage, Elmrich declared before his subjects his desire to take the beautiful Forest Rose as his bride, to rebuild the castle, to live therein, and to create a large park in the area of the forest where the old oak stood. In this park, no animals would be allowed to be hunted, trapped, or shot, and all the flowers and trees would be cared for meticulously.

In the evening before his wedding day, Elmrich led Forest Rose before the old oak and told her the whole strange story. They both thanked the oak in unison for granting them his protection. On one of the old oak’s branches sat the magpie and cuckoo, singing their jubilation aloud. Then suddenly

the sunken earth beneath their feet opened up, and in the same place where the will-o’-the-wisps had come in the night, tiny miners climbed higher and higher in a long, long train out of the earth. They wore aprons and carried hammers, picks, and mining lamps. Following them were numerous little folk from every rank wearing the most noble of trappings. Some wore little crowns of flowers, none larger than a shilling. Others carried tiny bags of gold, and still others red velvet pillows, which were quite heavy for them, and on each one lay a precious stone to adorn the beautiful bride. Following them came tiny musicians, who played every imaginable instrument and sang with beautiful, delicate little voices. Then came a host of girls dressed in white, each one no larger than a finger, carrying the bride’s crown. Had they not been forbidden to do so, they would have groaned mightily from the weight of their burden.

The sun was already low in the sky as the little parade came out of the mine and gathered around the tree. And although the miners formed a circle with their torches, the dwarves must not have found it to be light enough, for with a wave streamed perhaps a thousand will-o’-the-wisps out of every corner of the forest, leading a ballet that ended in a pyramid of light. The speaker for these fairy folk gave a long speech to the bride and groom and gave precious gifts to Forest Rose that she should wear on her special day. Then one of the small miners stepped under the oak, thanked him for allowing them to travel through his roots, and gave closing remarks about the forest and the meadows, the man and the woman, and every being that grew and existed in the great mercy of the Spirit of the Earth, who gives them all life and prosperity.

The oak began, however, to make noise, and her tones were like those of an unearthly melody; then she trailed off quieter and ever quieter, while the torches, dwarves, and will-o’-the-wisps disappeared one by one.

When the young count came back to himself, he stood with his lovely bride on the castle terrace, and before her lay gold, the crown, and the most noble bride’s jewels that a countess had ever worn.

And they lived long and happily, but the old oak outlived them all!

Paper cut of fairy folk by Adele Schopenhauer. From Hans Kroeber, ed., *Das Silhouettenbuch der Adele Schopenhauer* (Weimar: Gustav Keipenhauer Verlag, 1913), 10.

1 From Adele Schopenhauer, “Waldmärchen” in *Haus-, Wald-, und Feldmärchen* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1844), 1–49.

2 The blue flower is an important symbol of German Romanticism. First appearing in Novalis’s 1800 *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, the blue flower represents the Romantic longing for the unattainable and the sublime, such as beauty, inspiration, and a oneness with nature.

3 In German, *Quellenmärchen* (“The Fairy Tale of the Spring”) carries a double meaning. The word *Quelle* can mean a natural spring from which water can be gathered, or it can mean a source, of an original text, for example. Of course, *Quellenmärchen* is the fictional source tale for “The Forest Fairy Tale” and reflects an obsession with the concept of the original, which continues to be a problematic topic in fairy-tale studies today.

4 An oak apple is caused by a parasitic transmission from gall wasps.

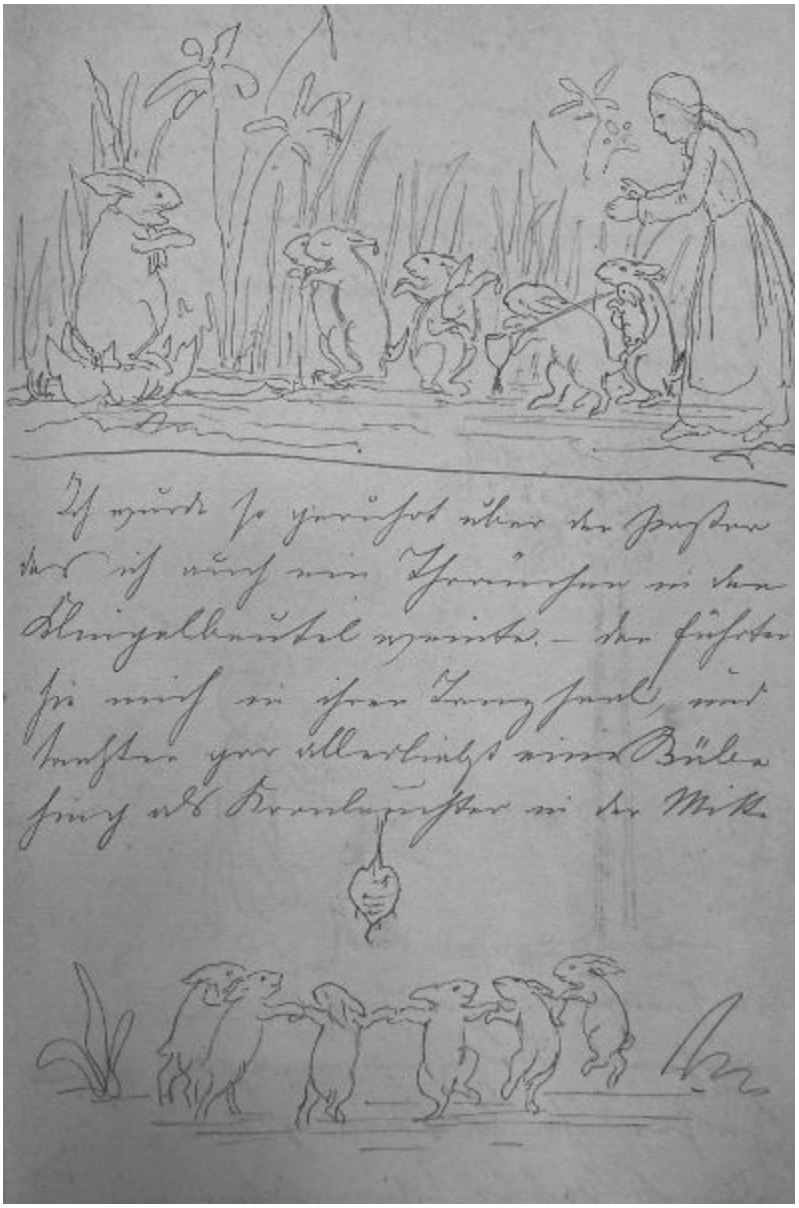
5 Ladybugs are called *Marienkäfer*, or “Mary’s beetles,” in German. They are considered good luck and are associated with the Virgin Mary and, before her, the goddess Freya.

Gisela von Arnim

Gisela von Arnim (1827–89) was the seventh and last child of Achim and Bettina von Arnim. The beginning of her life coincided with the beginning of her mother's most successful period as an author. Calling herself a *Märchenkind* (fairy-tale child), Gisela von Arnim grew up "in a milieu that was strongly influenced by the Arnim-Brentano family tradition of Romanticism and the fairy tale" (Jarvis, "Trivial Pursuit" 106). The founding of the *Kaffeterkreis*, a fairy-tale salon in Berlin, provided Arnim the opportunity to produce writing on a regular basis. Members took on pseudonyms and submitted stories, poems, compositions, and art to be reviewed at their meetings (Mey 33). In this period, Arnim wrote the fairy-tale novel *Das Leben der Hochgräfin Gritta von Rattenzuhausbeiuns* (*The Life of High Countess Gritta from Ratsinourhouse*), for which she is best known today. In 1859, the year of her mother's death, she married Herman Grimm, son of Wilhelm and Dortchen Grimm, whose work also appears in this collection. As an adult, Arnim wrote mostly dramas, though she is not remembered for them today.

The story included here, "Of Rabbits," comes from a series of fairy-tale letters she wrote as an adult to her sickly nephew, Achim von Arnim, who was named after his grandfather. The letters feature original fairy tales and beautiful illustrations by Arnim to comfort her nephew.[1] Each story is said to come from the ghost of an old woman who visits Arnim each night. "Of Rabbits" represents how women used fairy tales in the period for a private audience. We have many examples of German writers, such as Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, who remember hearing fairy tales from nursemaids, mothers, aunts, and grandmothers, but here we have an example of a written fairy tale that was produced for a one-child audience. It is also worth noting that although Arnim stopped publishing fantastical works and stuck to realistic dramas in her later life, fairy tales clearly continued to be an important part of her creative life.

1 These letters have been transcribed and assembled in a beautiful 1991 collection by Shawn Jarvis, titled *Märchenbriefe an Achim* (Fairy-Tale Letters to Achim).



Gisela von Arnim drew lovely illustrations within the very letters that she wrote to her nephew. Depicted here are the scenes of the rabbit service and the dance that followed. From Gisela von Arnim, “Vom Hasen” in *Märchenbriefe mit Handzeichnungen für den Neffen Achim v. Arnim* (GSA: Arnim-Brentano Nachlass, n.d.), 3/995, 4 pp.

“Of Rabbits”: Letter to Achim von Arnim (1850s)

Translated by Julie L. J. Koehler[1]

As I softly slept, there was a gentle rustling over the floor next to me three times, as if the dust were settling, and then the old woman was sitting beside me. “Now listen to me,” she said. “I want to tell you of a visit, which I made as a child to a rabbit family. I awoke very early, for the rooster had crowed, and I went down into our vegetable garden, and there sat a bunny in the cabbage and bid me to come with him.

“There was something of a rabbit church, for we went through the blooming flowers and came to a little square where the minister rabbit preached from atop a head of cabbage. One rabbit went around with a bag for the collection and gathered dewdrops that hung from the rabbits’ ears as if they were money. I was so moved by the pastor that I also cried a little tear into the collection bag. Then the rabbits led me to their dance hall and danced around their favorite turnip, which hung like chandelier in the middle of the hall. Everyone ate radishes.

“Then a young rabbit stood before me. He was in love with a rose princess and wanted to go and serenade her. I wanted to go with him and sing too.

“We sang so beautifully, that the charming rose princess gave the rabbit a yes. In thanks for my help, all the rabbits gave me a little fur cap. Suddenly I was back in bed and did not know how I had gotten there—only that when I awoke, the cap of rabbit fur lay on my bed. My mother said that she had bought it for me, but I knew right well that it was from the rabbits and ate my breakfast happily.”

With these words, the old one was gone.

1 From Gisela von Arnim, “Vom Hasen,” in *Märchenbriefe mit Handzeichnungen für den Neffen Achim v. Arnim* (GSA: Arnim-Brentano Nachlass, n.d.), 3/955, 4 pp.

Elisabeth Ebeling

Using the pseudonym Elisabeth Ebeling, Christa Ling (1828–1905) wrote scores of novellas, stories, and plays for children in the mid- to late nineteenth century, often with a pointed moral. Many of her tales appear later in school readers. Yet in spite of her very productive career, only a handful of libraries still hold her books in Germany.[1] Ebeling published her works after the Grimms' *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*) had become popular, and she attempted to make her own mark on the world of fairy tales. Although her books are no longer easily accessible today, her dramatized version of "Dornröschen" ("Sleeping Beauty") served as the basis of the libretto for the 1902 opera by Engelbert Humperdinck, for which she is credited even today.

Ebeling's fairy tale "Black and White" is unique for its time. Its representation of a Black man as not only beautiful, smart, and strong but also smarter and stronger than all the White suitors was a unique literary depiction for the time. In German fairy tales, characters are sometimes covered in black pitch or have their skin dyed black as a punishment. While the French writer Félicité de Choiseul-Meuse also uses race in her tale "Rose and Black," the heroine's Blackness is given a negative value, even if, unlike other tales from the period, the heroine remains good. The refreshing moral of Ebeling's tale is "that the color of one's skin is of little importance. It does not matter if you look White or Black; it only matters if you are wise." The moral went against pseudo-scientific studies on race in the period, which sought to prove that White men were physically and mentally superior. That being said, the moral is ultimately colorblind and actually conflicts with content of the story, in which color appears to matter quite a bit in Almansor's experiences with both his own kingdom and the kingdom to the north.

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1 With respect to the presence of her works in US libraries, only one book, the collection *Fantaska*, is available as part of the microfiche collection “Bibliothek der deutschen Literatur” (Library of German literature).

“Black and White” (1869)

Translated by Julie L. J. Koehler[1]

In the days when the fairy tale still wandered the earth and beckoned in the form of a beautiful maiden with mysterious, fathomless eyes from a far-off country, and all around the world’s wonders appeared and mystical powers awoke, there lay a great Moorish empire deep in Africa, whose king was called Selim.[2]

The king, a powerful and brave ruler, had conquered all the neighboring lands during his long reign, and when the lords of the far northern folk sailed near his coast and attempted an invasion, he quickly caught and imprisoned them. The last one had bought his freedom through a ransom but had to promise to send the king gold every year.

As the time approached when the tribute ought to be gathered for the first time, the oldest son of the king, Almansor, journeyed with scores of knights as an escort to the far-off land in order to collect the costly bond.

After enduring the long trip, the prince was happy to land on the coast that was his destination and leave the ship with his entourage in order to travel to King Odo’s castle high on a mighty mountain. It was a grand sight, to see how this colorfully and costly dressed knight slowly rode up higher and higher. Prince Almansor rode a noble milk-white Arabian stallion that proudly strode up the mountain. The prince was as beautiful as the night and built like a strong tree in the forest.

The color of his skin was a deep black that was broken only by the ivory white of his teeth, the blood red of his lips, and the whites of his eyes. A purple-red robe was wrapped around his giant form, and upon his worthy hair sat a white turban adorned with fluttering ostrich feathers encrusted with priceless diamonds. The view of the castle widened, and eagerly they looked out for the White men, of whom they had heard so much. But the land was barren, and nowhere did a living being look back at them. Only from above, from the castle, could they hear roaring and resounding music.

In front of the high-arched door of the palace, Almansor's heralders blew horns made of elephant's tusks. The extraordinarily strong sound was all the more emphasized by the sudden silence of the ringing fanfare within the castle walls. Then the doors flew open, and a stream of stunned people received the Black visitors. A stately knight approached the Moorish heralders and asked after their purpose. "We come in the name of King Selim, our powerful and illustrious ruler. Duties and interest are demanded from King Odo, the ruler of this land," was the answer. The knight removed his hat as he heard these words, and the whole group of people moved fearfully aside to allow the strange, dreaded prince in, the prince whose arrival they had so anxiously awaited. The prince set himself anew in the train and continued toward the court within, which featured an equally surprising view. A wide courtyard, bordered by buildings and a garden, had been transformed into a tournament field. Colorful flags waved from the countless towers of the palace, the aromatic garlands of flowers were draped from window to window, and thousands of knights practiced before a high dais draped in red velvet. Upon the platform sat the ladies of the court in festive robes and, in the center, the queen of the day, the lovely Princess Obstinata.[3]

The people looked stunned at the Black guests who suddenly appeared in their midst, and the guests could hardly have felt comfortable themselves with this strange picture of White beings. The same knight who had spoken with the heralders asked Almansor to dismount and follow him to the king, who sat next to his daughter on the dais. No sooner had the prince climbed the few steps, about to begin his address, than he was struck speechless and sank to his knees, as he had sighted Obstinata. And truly, no one could blame him, for she was as beautiful as the day. Her skin was white and rosy, and her dark blue eyes shone like stars, and her full facet was framed by numerous golden locks. Almansor thought he had never seen anything more beautiful than this maiden, and his speech to the king was in no way proud, like one would have expected from the son of a conqueror, but rather mild and ingratiating as if he hoped to win the good graces of the king. The king answered in the same tone and warmly invited the prince to stay with him and glorify the princess's birthday celebration with his presence. Almansor accepted this welcoming invitation with great joy. He quickly joined the battling knights and soon even the strongest had to yield and declare

themselves defeated by Almansor. As the tourney came to an end, [and] the princess presented Almansor the prize, a white rose.

He proudly accepted the rose, as if it were a most precious jewel. He kneeled before the princess and pinned the rose to his turban, but he did not notice the sneering look on her face as she whispered to one of her ladies, “If he sniffs it, we will soon behold the miracle of a black rose.”

The day had barely broken the following morning, and all who lived at the castle still lay in deepest sleep when Almansor woke his manservant and began to dress. He had decided in the night to earn the hand of the princess and was too impatient to wait for the old king to awake. The king was in that moment dreaming sweetly, and his valet, trembling, stepped into the room. He hesitantly pinched the king’s nose—for he was not to wake the king in any other manner. The king furiously jumped into the air and asked very ungraciously why his best sleep had been disturbed. “Your Majesty,” stammered the valet, “his Black highness insisted that he immediately be allowed to come see you.”

“Ah, Prince Almansor!” called out the king, and threw on his clothes so hastily that he put his velvet sleeping robe on backward and placed his wig completely askew on his head. The valet helped him with his toiletries, but the king was so impatient with them that the valet shoved the golden snuffbox into his bag without even offering any and led the hurried prince into the room.

The prince did not beat around the bush and went right to the point of his early visit and asked for the hand of Princess Obstinata, and in exchange he would promise to forgive the king’s debt. Odo was visibly embarrassed as he received this proposal and paused moment before he answered.

“Most serene prince,” he finally replied. “The proposal that you have made, honors me beyond words, and would, for my part, be accepted with great joy, if my daughter were not so fussy in her taste.”

Almansor’s face darkened with these words. The king noticed this and quickly continued on, “It has nothing to do with your appearance, Your Highness, that is the least of my worries. It is only that I had to give her my word that she would not be forced into a marriage. She has decided in turn to choose a man only if she can be convinced of his bravery and intellect.”

“No one will doubt my bravery,” replied Almansor.

“Surely not,” agreed the king. “And your intellect will also be proven if you would fulfill my wish and stay with us until winter, when a tournament for the suitors of my daughter will take place and when she will give her hand to whomever can solve a riddle the fastest.”

“Now then,” replied Almansor joyfully, “I accept your invitation, dear king, and will become, if the fates will allow it, your son-in-law!”

The summer passed with festivals, hunting, and revelry. Almansor did not regret for a moment his decision to stay at Odo’s court, for the beautiful Obstinata appeared to be lovelier with every day that passed. He could hardly wait for the suitors’ contest to take place. Many powerful and rich sons of lords would compete with him for the hand of the princess, but none could boast of the same advantages that Almansor had. Among them, it seemed, in fact, as if she favored one or the other, but then that one could count on being rejected in the next moment, for the good princess was under the guidance of an evil fairy named Launia, and therefore the poor suitors had to bear quite a bit of suffering. In spite of this, they all stayed true to their goal and were blinded enough to believe that they may be lucky enough to earn the hand of the lovely, but willful, princess. Finally, the day of the riddle contest arrived. Obstinata had decided on the three days before Christmas Eve and invited the whole royal court, in addition to the suitors, to gather in the throne room, where the contest would take place. At the higher end of the gorgeously adorned hall sat the princess and the king under a gilded dais. Behind them sat the royal court, and to both sides of the throne stood two heralders with waving flags. On the other end of the hall, the candidates stood in a half circle, and among them, Almansor was dressed in the most magnificent robes. They all tried to appear as witty as possible, but so few of them had succeeded that Obstinata compared them in a low voice to a herd of sheep.

Three trumpet blows gave the signal that the contest would begin, and the princess rose from her seat. A breathless hush spread throughout the wide hall, during which she spoke the following:

I appear to many as nothing at all,

A mere drop in the space of time.

Though when you are in pain, I can appear to stretch

to a dreadful eternity.

Only few know how to utilize me,
Namely those who can catch me.
I help them reach their goal
I often make them into tall men.

I die when I am hardly born.
My existence is a fleeting dream.
I swoosh past you,
And you, you hardly notice me at all.

After she finished, Obstinata sat down beside her father again, and the heralders announced that the suitors would have a period of five minutes to consider the given riddle. A great hush passed over the hall. The guessers were at once pale and then flushed, and most of their brows were damp with sweat. Some looked at the ceiling and others looked at the floor, while a few wrung their hands. Only Almansor stood still among them and appeared to be very sure of his victory.

Soon the period had passed, and again the princess stood up and gave the signal that she was read to hear the solution. But oh, it looked quite bad out there, for the suitors were all rooted to their spots, except for Almansor. He stepped forward with a quiet and proud countenance, bowed with great reverence, and requested permission give his answer in the form of a new riddle in order to give the two-syllable solution. Taunting and smiling, Obstinata granted the request and the prince began then with the following:

Two stars are the first
To stand not nightly in the sky
But are set in her face
And brightly shine as if from the heavens.[4]

The last is a child of the first

And should be a mirror of the soul
Surely a soul without deceit or falsehood
That always looks out clear and pure.

The whole would unlock for me
the height of inspiring joy.
It would be, if I guessed correctly,
the most beautiful moment or view.

The trumpets played as a flag unfurled with the word *moment* embroidered in purple script on a white background, showing everyone that Prince Almansor had correctly solved the riddle. A loud cry of joy greeted Almansor as the king left his throne to congratulate him and lead him to his daughter who did not, however, look at all happy to be so surprised. She was the picture of disgust, with pale cheeks and staring eyes. She remained in her seat and stretched out her hands defensively when her future groom bent down before her on his knees.

The old king tried to excuse this unusual behavior as only nerves, but Obstinata interrupted him quickly and spoke with the total obstinance of a spoiled child: “No, Father, it is not nerves. I do not want and will never agree to marry this prince. I allowed him to take part in the contest only as a joke, and unfortunately he is somehow the cleverest of the group.”

Shocked at such rudeness, which was beyond the pale, the king and the lords and ladies of the court looked to Almansor, who stood very still, like a column.

“But, my child, my dear Obstinata, collect yourself!” said Odo finally. “You have allowed the prince to take part and promised that the one who solved the riddle would be your betrothed, and you must have him and keep your word now.”

“No, I neither have to do this, nor will I do it,” said the princess. “I have had a fear of chimney sweeps since childhood and will not, therefore, agree to marry a Moor, a man I will always be tempted to advise to wash himself but who will never become white.” She too loudly proclaimed, “No! If Prince Almansor cannot change his color and become a lighter shade, like

you and I are, Father, then I will never give him my hand in marriage. This I swear, so long as my name is Obstinata!”

With that, the princess rushed out of the hall and left her father and entire court in the greatest dismay and left poor Almansor in the lowest of spirits. For his sorrow about the shattering of his hopes to win the beautiful Obstinata soon turned to bitter shame as the other suitors, who had just a moment before been so jealous of him, now laughed behind his back and made fun of his misfortune. The old king composed himself again and humbly begged the prince to not allow this offense to turn him away from the old king in anger. The prince could never have allowed this anger into his heart and assured the king that was not mad at him, only very sad that the princess failed to give him her hand.

“You should try it, my prince, to become white,” jeered one of the other suitors. “There are indeed instances, of men who have washed Moors white, so you could succeed in this feat as well.”

“Yes, you should attempt it,” the king chimed in, excited. “Then my daughter must give in and take you as her spouse.”

“Very well,” said Almansor. “I will seek all the powers of nature and the whole of the magical world. I will wander the wide earth in order to lose this hated color, which so displeases the princess.”

“Oh, my prince,” spoke up his old, true servant, who had been granted him by his father, “consider what you say. This is the color of your parents; it is the color of your people that you wish to give up!”

“But not the color of Obstinata!” interrupted the prince, and then he issued a command to his entourage in short, urgent words. They were to sail for home the next morning without him and without the tribute (for he had not yet given up hope that he would become the princess’s betrothed, and so he dispensed with this). He soon left himself, after King Odo bestowed upon him a magical ring that allowed him to understand the speech of animals and all living things. Then he began his journey, with the goal of becoming a White man.

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The stars sparkled brightly in dark sky as Almansor wandered sadly out in the still night. He curiously looked up at the pale face of the moon, which

had a wise and ghostly shimmer in this weather. Almansor walked onward, his head sunk down toward the earth. Finally, tiredness overcame him, and he saw a stable where he could rest. He found a sleeping stall that had an open door. He stepped inside, laid himself under the sleeping animals, and fell fast asleep. He soon was awoken, however, by the bleating and stomping of the herd, which appeared to engage in a lively discussion. Almansor saw how blindingly white the sheep looked in the bright moonlight, and he turned his ring in order to ask them where he could acquire a similar color. Just as this happened, however, an old ram with large curly horns, who appeared to be the head of the herd, walked up to him and spoke. “Surely you are Prince Almansor of whom the shepherd spoke with his wife, for we are royal sheep, and he was up at the castle today.”

“Yes, Mr. Ram,” responded the prince. “I am Almansor.”

“Please, call me Bellwether,” said the ram, and turned toward the herd. “You see my lady ewes, my lord rams, and young, roguish lambs, I was right when I saw a Black man here, unexpectedly in our presence, and not a charcoal burner, as you thought, but actually the prince Almansor.”

Altogether the humbled ewes acknowledged that bellwether was right. He turned to the prince and inquired, offering his beard, if he could prove to be of any service.

“Perhaps, Mr. Ram,” responded Almansor, and he asked his advice as to whether anyone could acquire so white a color as the wool of the lambs.

“Nothing is easier than that,” said the old ram. “Our shepherd knows the miracle herb with which he bleaches the black sheep, and if you ask him about it, perhaps he will make your skin white and as bright as the day. And you will have not only this characteristic; the similarities with us will be even greater. Your soul will become a sheep completely.”

Almansor quickly left the stall. He had heard enough and smiled at the thought of returning to Obstinata as a sheep. As the next morning broken, he traveled on farther, always forwards, out into the wide world.

On the third day since he had left the castle, he was ready to call an end to it. Then the sky darkened and black clouds rolled in, and a great flakes of snow fell, and as they sank toward the earth dancing and whirling, they sang:

We play and fall
We fly and flow
In the bright light of day
In a swirling dance.

We fly and float.
We create and weave
Across the autumnal land
A starry robe.

The flakes became ever thicker and the dance more amazing. Soon the dark fir trees were full of glittering snowflakes, and soon the mossy floor of the forest was transformed into a white blanket. Then Almansor quietly whispered the question, “How can I become white, as you are, you light, floating spirits that I have never before now beheld?”

A harmonious ringing and singing started right away and the flakes answered:

Higher and higher you must climb
Where the air is cleaner,
Where the proud eagles nest,
Where the rivers flow downstream,

Where avalanches thunder,
And winter lives forever,
Where the old glacier king,
Is alone and majestically enthroned.

As they whirled and swirled around him, Almansor’s eyes sank into sleep. He lay down on the soft snow, and the falling flakes gathered upon him and made for him a thick blanket. He dreamed of far-off Asia, where the mountains are so high in the clouds that you cannot see their tops. Where the giant peaks of the Himalayas stand, and their ancient heads rise over all

others. When he awoke, he knew where he had to travel to in order to achieve his goal.

A long, long time he traveled and patiently endured numerous dangers and hurdles on his great journey. He fought with highwaymen and wild animals. He withstood hunger and thirst and never allowed his courage to fail him. He traveled to the border of Europe, climbed the rough mountains of the Caucasus, and finally reached the sought-after continent of Asia after traveling through India, where the holy Ganges flows and the lotus flower blooms and the Indians kneel before Brahma. When he was dead-tired that evening, his eyes looked up and he finally caught sight of the goal for which he suffered. He stepped out from under a stand of palm trees to an open area and saw with astonishment the mountain range that towered above him in gigantic forms across the sky. He saw them and shuddered, for he thought of the hardships that he would have to be ready for. Then he looked up to the towering height and saw a cloud formation, a form of unending clarity and purity. As he took it in, in amazement, as he wondered at the spotless whiteness itself, it then began to change colors and become rosy and then ever redder until it was the darkest purple, and all the mountain peaks lit up and glowed, the flowers of the valley smelled sweet, and the birds all sang. Everything praised and glorified the heavenly beauty of the state of light, the palace of clarity, and the residence of the Glacier King, who rose above in total majesty and sublimity.

Then Almansor took courage, and as the night fell, he began his climb upward with fresh resolve. First, he came through an elevated tropical palm tree forest, where colorful hummingbirds flittered about like flying diamonds, and the glowing eyes of the panthers lit the behind the bushes. The rattlesnakes hid themselves under the flowers. Higher he climbed and found himself in a fabulous green hall of gleaming beech and oak trees and then, where the ground was blanked in a carpet of moss, in a forest of firs and spruce trees who lifted their evergreen heads. Then this also disappeared, and only dwarf birches and a few lichens creeped along the forest floor. And finally he came to where no trees grew, and in place of their greenery and blooms, there appeared an indescribable beauty, for he found himself in the wonder of the heights, the magical world of the mountains. A stillness, a peace ruled in this place, high above the lower world in sublime isolation, an uncanny feeling, a hush, in one’s heart hush, and one had to bow to the wonderous majesty of nature. Except for the

transient chamois, who hurried past in the shadows, there were no living creatures in view. Almansor called out to them and asked them to lead him to the palace of the Glacier King, which sat in the swirling heights. They led him into the abyss, where the thundering avalanches fell around him, and the brewing mountain storms overhead created a realm of endless snow. All life froze here, and the carpet of flowers was transformed into a white cloth of corpses. The ice towered in monstrous blue and green waves, and here sat the palace of the Glacier King in his radiant majesty. He sat in a powerful ice grotto made of glowing, clear ice crystals, which refracted the sunlight into a thousand-colored brilliance, so the eye could not endure the overwhelming grandeur of it all. Here, Almansor left his nimble guide and walked alone inside the great, open hall, where his fate would be decided. Inside the grotto was as wonderous as outside. The blue sky could be seen all around, and rays of sunlight filled the space with a brightness, as if it were the cradle of the day. A dais stood at a terribly majestic height in the very center of the grotto. His [the Glacier King's] skin was as white as the snow, and he wore his silver hair like a robe around him. His powerful eyes glowed uncannily, as if they would crush the guilty. Almansor kneeled and bowed, humbled before the king's eyes, and wanted to present his request in a stammering voice, but the king of ice interrupted him with a voice as powerful as the rolling avalanches outside. "Silence, boy, your wish was already known to me before you said it. If the holiness and majesty of the regions through which you traveled have not taught you the foolishness of your request, then neither will my fruitless protests—you know your will. And so you will freeze"—and in this moment he pointed at Almansor with his ice finger—"and fade into a White man!"

Then a horrific deathly color crept slowly through the veins of the prince. The life within him froze more and more, and his limbs lost their ability to move and became like ice, but he retained his consciousness and feeling.

Days, weeks, and months rushed past for Almansor, during which he remained unchanged in this terrible state. Every movement had been stolen from him, and instead he remained as the Glacier King's stare bore into him. Until finally the king lifted his ice finger and allowed a ray of sun that was caught by the grotto's crystal to pierce the heart of the prince. His heart softly began to beat again, and his life, which had been restrained for so long, began to return. Almansor attempted to move his hands; he lifted

himself up off his knees and began to cheer like a child, as he could use his limbs again.

“Your wish is fulfilled,” said the Glacier King. “You are as White as the day. Leave me now, and spare me your thanks.”

Almansor spoke no word in response and left the ice hall and the land of endless winter. He climbed back down to the earth, to the inhabitants of the lower world. As he arrived here, he greeted every tree and flower with joy and hurried without rest to the residence of King Odo, the home of Obstinata.

Exactly a year had passed since the first time Almansor had entered the castle of the White king. Everyone was celebrating again today, for it was the princess’s birthday party. Flags waved, bells rang, and another tourney began. A colorful crowd filled the castle court. Joy and delight ruled the day wherever you looked. As before, Obstinata sat high on a dais and received her required homage. Then a strange, quiet whisper began to spread throughout the celebrating crowd, and they all looked shocked at the majestic manly form that suddenly stood in their midst. No one knew where he came from or he was.

And who was this pale man in the foreign costume of the Moors who relentlessly pushed forward and had eyes only for the princess? Now he is before her, and now he has taken her hand, and she stares at him and calls to him, and in her way that so many had experienced, loud and tauntingly, “My heavens, Prince Almansor, white as snow and still as ugly as can be!”

Illustration by Theodor Hosemann. From Elisabeth Ebeling, “Schwarz und Weiß: Ein Märchen,” in *Fantaska: Gesammelte Märchen, Legenden und Sagen von E. Ebeling; mit 6 kolorierten Bildern von Prof. Hosemann* (Berlin: Winckleman & Söhne, 1869), 120.

The king also noticed the traveler and hurried over to greet him, but Almansor was finally brought to his senses. The scornful words of Obstinata opened his eyes. He suddenly despised her with as much passion as he had loved her before. When she produced a small mirror to have even more fun at his expense, he saw his White Moorish face starring out at him with a wide nose and full lips. He turned his back on her and silently left, ignoring the pleas of the king, and walked out of the castle never to return.

He went to the shore of the sea, told the waves of his deep sorrow, and lamented his wasted quest from its foolish beginning. Then he sent the magical ring that Odo had given him back to the castle via a swallow that nested at the castle, and hired himself out as a sailor on a ship that was sailing back to his home. In a few months, the ship brought him the African coast, where he left the ship and hurried home to the land of his father. Soon he saw the high pyramids that rose above his father's tented city. He heard the rush of the Nile and the trumpeting of the elephants and he knew that he was home. Only a few more steps, and he would be with his parents and could feel the comfort of their love ease the many sorrows he had endured. Just then, he spotted the children who were in charge of feeding the tame ostriches. Almansor smiled at them and greeting them warmly, but they covered their eyes with their hands [and] yelled, frightened, "The devil is coming! The devil is coming!" and ran away from him into their tent. The screams of the little ones brought the parents quickly over and they stared at the prince and also made gestures of horror. "Yes, it is the devil, who wants to corrupt us!" And all the men, women, and children ran from him and sought refuge in the great tent of the king, which rose above them in majesty. Speechless, Almansor followed behind them. He had never considered, had no idea, that he could cause such fear and flight. He pulled back the silken drapes that adorned the king's tent and saw his father in the middle of the terrified people who kneeled before him and begged his protection against the coming devil.

"My father," called Almansor. His longing overtook him, and [he] rushed to his father and covered his hand with kisses.

"What do you want here, you White devil? Do you want to ruin my people, just like your kind murdered my son and have made me childless?" yelled Selim in horror, and tore himself away from Almansor, but Almansor only caught him again and said affectionately:

"My father, your son lives! He stands before you. Do you not recognize him?"

"You would be my son?" said the King. "You are a deceiver, a liar! My son was as black as ebony and as beautiful as the dark night. You are white like the devil and as ugly as a monster. Leave me and flee, before my soldiers catch you and kill you!"

“Have mercy, Father!” said the unhappy prince, but Selim had no compassion. He pushed him away and command him to leave the tent under punishment of death and never to let his eyes fall on this land again. With a breaking heart, Almansor obeyed. As if in a dream, he stepped out of the tent and stood helpless and in despair, not knowing where he should turn.

“My people flee from me, my father has banned me, and the White people are disgusted with me,” he whispered to himself. “Where shall I now turn? Me, a poor unfortunate?”

Then he felt a hand fall softly on his shoulder and a soft voice spoke. “My son, my poor son!” He turned around and fell into the arms of his mother. She had seen him from afar and recognized him in spite of his white color, for regardless of his change of the appearance, her mother’s heart recognized him, and when all others ran from him, it was a mother’s love alone that would welcome him home. For a long time, she silently held him fast, and then the queen led the prince to her tent, where he would be safe from the fearful Selim for a while. Here she heard his story and reflected with him about what could be done. When he was with her, he need not fear the wrath of his father, but she sent him to befriend a wise man who would advise him on what he could do to earn his father’s love again.

The wise man Cyrillus lived among the ancient tombs of kings, who had been entombed in the cliffs on the Nile’s shore. He lived in a great cavern painted with strange hieroglyphics. The waves crashed and echoed eerily as they passed by. Almansor arrived the day after his appearance in the tent city. A mysterious darkness ruled within the cavern and gave the space a horrific, ghostly appearance. Mummies of men and animals were scattered around, a giant snake carved out of stone wound around the length of the walls, and in the darkest corner cowered a being with a very unnatural appearance. An ancient Moor with white hair and a long white beard, old enough to be a picture of the past, was hunkered down reading yellowed papyrus rolls by dim torchlight. As Almansor entered the cave, some nocturnal birds and bats with huge wings swept through the air. Then the old spirit rose up and walked toward the traveler.

“Who are you who disturbs my solitude that men have not interrupted for centuries?” he asked in a grave voice. Almansor told him who he was, who had sent him, and why he had come to the old one. Almansor shared with

him all that he had experienced and asked for his advice and his help. Then Cyrillus shook his head and spoke in earnest:

“You acted like a child. True love requires every sacrifice, even those that go against logic and reason—but you should never let a woman’s whim drive you, and no person should give up the gifts that nature has bestowed upon him in order to yield to a girl’s inclination. You have deserved the punishment that you have already experienced. I cannot help you, but I can advise you: You have been so focused on Black and White. Go into the solitude of the desert and work there for the well-being of your people; then you will at least achieve an inner peace.”

Then he gave him a small wonderous bottle of water, which had the ability to refill itself daily, and a basket with three dates, which would refill every morning, so that he would not suffer in the fruitless, dry desert. In the distance, the wise man had left a spade and marked out a place where Almansor should go and dig for the priceless treasure that the desert nomads know well, for water. Almansor left the wise Cyrillus and went into the desert, into the glowing solitude of the sand sea, where the sun’s rays burn like fire, where no shrub and no tree break the unending monotony, where the elusive ostrich and the shy antelope are the only living things, and they rushed past him like ghosts.

Beside a mound of yellowed camel and human bones, Almansor began his exhausting work and dug with sweat pouring down his face, suffering from hunger and thirst, for the wise man’s water and fruit were enough only to keep him alive but not, however, enough to satisfy him.

As he dug and worked for his brothers whom he had disowned when he became White, he became peaceful and happy again. Despair left him, and his inner peace returned. The stony, dried earth resisted Almansor’s efforts. The hot wind often blew his work away for weeks at a time, and he had to start his hard work again hundreds of times. Nevertheless, he did not allow his courage to fail, and his perseverance was not fruitless. Finally, the sand became damper and damper, and individual drops of water, which appeared to Almansor as the most beautiful pearls, began to surface, and then it happened. One more stab with the shovel and one more powerful push—then his goal was achieved and the treasure was found—a clear spring appeared before him. He raised his hands thankfully to the heavens and

sank down beside it, bowing to the priceless element that he had found, and refreshed his lips with a cool drink.

But what is this? Is it an illusion or the truth? What looked at him out of the water’s reflection? A proud, beautiful Black face laughed back at him. He had lost his white color. The desert sun had darkened him until his skin had been transformed back into that of a Moor. As if he were newly born, he jumped up into the air, and then a thousand joyful cheers rang out. He looked up and saw his parents at the front of a gathering of his entire people, who had come to greet their son and prince. His mother had allowed no peace or rest and had worked, tireless, for her child, calming and convincing his father that it was his son whom he had banished to appease his people. The king was then freed from his own foolishness and led them all into the desert, where his mother had sent him to Cyrillus in order to bring the banished one home again. They arrived at the happiest moment, when he had achieved his goal and found the treasure that he had been digging for.

Everyone celebrated now and welcomed their prince, who now wore the color of his people again and, for their sake, had created this well in the desert. The parents gathered their recovered son in their arms and rejoiced with their whole hearts, for he was again like them, a picture of the night.

Then they celebrated him in triumph back at the tent city, where he would go on to lead a worthy life. The well in the desert was planted with fruit trees and soon developed into a lovely green blooming island in the middle of the dry sand sea of the desert. Thousands of travelers refreshed themselves at the clear water of the Almansor-Font, as the oasis was named. Soon after it was dug, a strangely formed stone appeared, which was similar in appearance to a picture of a crying maiden, and it was situated so its reflection appeared in the crystal waters. No one knew when it had arrived or who had brought it. The swallows, however, that traveled every year from the north to the south, from King Odo’s land to Africa, had heard the whole thing and chattered often about the story of the headstrong Princess Obstinata, who had treated all her suitors with the same petulance. A powerful king, the favorite of a fairy, had sought her hand, and she had named him Lord Cross-Eyes, owing to his crooked appearance. This so offended him that he had begged the fairy to seek revenge against the princess, and she fulfilled his wish. The fairy transformed Obstinata into a

statue, causing her father, the king, the most bitter pain. He did not live long after this misfortune. The fairy brought the statue to the oasis in Africa that the man she had treated so disdainfully, Prince Almansor, had built.

Here she was condemned to stare at her own deformed face in the water for an eternity and to hear every traveler taunt her appearance and also praise the great man whom she had once shamed.

And Almansor deserved this praise in the fullest measure. Following his father's death, he reigned with goodness, strength, and reason, for he had learned that the color of one's skin is of little importance. It does not matter if you look White or Black; it only matters if you are wise.[5]

1 From Elisabeth Ebeling, "Schwarz und Weiß: Ein Märchen," in *Fantaska*: Gesammelte Märchen, Legenden und Sagen von E. Ebeling; mit 6 kolorierten Bildern von Prof. Hosemann (Berlin, 1869), 106–29.

2 The most accurate translation of the original German's *Mohr* and *Mohrisch* is "Moor" and "Moorish," respectively, which also represents the language that would have been used in the period in English; these terms are considered archaic and problematic today.

3 Ebeling often uses metaphorical names such as this one. The name has not been changed in English, because it carries the same meaning. *Obstinat* is a term used less often in German today but is a cognate to the English "obstinate."

4 The word for moment, *Augenblick*, literally breaks down into "eyes" (*Augen*) and "sight" (*Blick*). While the princess's riddle looked for the common use of the word, meaning "a moment," Almansor's response demonstrates not only his intelligence in solving the riddle but also his excellent understanding of the German language as he plays with the construction of the word to complement the princess and to give his answer. In the first stanza, he admires her beautiful eyes, and in the second, when he says "The last is a child of the first," he references the relationship between eyes and sight.

5 Another play with words here: The words for white (*weiß*) and wise (*weise*) have a similar construction.

Hedwig Dohm

Hedwig Dohm (1833–1919) was known for her feminist writings. She wrote plays, stories, novellas, and essays. In works such as *Die Antifeministen* (The Antifeminists, 1902), she openly criticized German thinkers and writers who were against the women's movement. Dohm argued that theories purporting that women were naturally better suited to motherhood and housework were constructs of the patriarchy meant to oppress women. She also spoke out against women who achieved power by taking on the role of the oppressor. One of Dohm's most famous works, *Werde, die du bist!* (Become Who You Are!), is a novella about an older woman who is a model wife and mother but who is discarded by society when she follows her own desires.

Whereas *Become Who You Are!* foregrounds the ways in which women are socially marginalized when they reject traditional gender roles, "Lotte the Grump" shows that simply wanting to become something else—an eagle, a fish, a deer, or perhaps a man—is not the answer. Dohm was known for stating that she would never want to be a man but instead wanted women to have equal rights and opportunities. Dohm's protagonist makes the mistake of wishing to be something else in order to attain happiness and fulfill her desires rather than modifying her own behavior and attitudes. The undeserving protagonist and the frustration of the wish granter both show how Dohm played with common fairy-tale motifs in a humorous way to make a subtle political point. Lotte's punishment is ultimately one of her own making, but at the same time she is an active protagonist who makes her own choices.[1]

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1 Dohm wrote only two fairy tales, the one included here and "Blumenduft" ("The Fragrance of Flowers"), a translation of which can be found in Jarvis and Blackwell's *The Queen's Mirror*.

“Lotte the Grump” (1899)

Translated by Corrina Peet[1]

Have you ever seen a truly grumpy, envious, fretful child?

I would like to tell you about one who was annoyed that the green trees were not red and that the blue sky was not green. She wished for the snow to be black; she wanted rain instead of sunshine; and when it rained, she was grumpier than ever. She was a cranky grump named Lotte, and everyone ran from her—children, adults, and even watchdogs. The larks stopped singing when she went into the garden, and in the evenings, the moon hid behind the clouds when it saw her because it was afraid of her crooked face. Lotte did not find it fair that she had to walk and stand carefully on two feet and that she could never fly through the air or swim underwater. “Ah,” she often exclaimed “if only I were an eagle in the sky or a little fish that could sway through crystal waters. If only I were a graceful deer in the forest.”

One day, when Miss Lotte was in a particularly bad mood, she went for a walk in the garden. There, hanging in front of her nose, was an ugly spiderweb. Annoyed, she tore it into a thousand pieces. She was about to continue her walk when a little voice, as if from the very grass upon which she stood, cried out: “Lotte, dear Lotte, thank you a thousand times—you saved my life when you so graciously destroyed that spiderweb in which I was trapped. I can conjure magic; make a wish.” The little voice belonged to a small rose beetle, who astounded Lotte when it winked at her with its glowing eyes. Lotte was careful not to say that it had not been her intention to save the rose beetle’s life. In fact, she threw back her head proudly and said, “Good, then, if you can conjure magic, hear this: I’d like to be an eagle.” Lotte was immediately transformed into an eagle and soared upward toward the clouds. It was wonderful! She saw the earth and its carpet of flowers below. Above, she saw the sapphire blue of the sky and the sun glistening through purple clouds. In the evening, the nearby stars looked

like pale pearls or gleaming rubies, and she bathed her wings in the rays of the sun. She could see the magnificence of heaven and earth; only the deep sea was impenetrable by her gaze. The sea glistened a luminous green, and now and then fish raised their heads, glancing scornfully at the eagle. “Good morning, Lotte,” they called, and when Eagle-Lotte flew quickly past to punish the naughty fish—WHOOSH!—they disappeared under the water.

Full of envy for the luck of the fish, Lotte flew up and down along the silver edge of the sea and thought: “Oh, how wonderful it would be to swim in the deep blue sea.” She didn’t dwell on this long but rather flew to the garden where the rose beetle sat under a bush. “Dear little beetle,” she said, “I no longer want to be an eagle. Transform me into a fish in the water.”

“Your wish is granted,” said the rose beetle, and the eagle became a goldfish.

Now, Grumpy-Goldfish swam with lightness and joy to the deepest depths of the sea and thought: “The sea is the most beautiful place of all!” She swam through wonderful forests in which strange flowers flaunted their radiant colors; the flowers and trees were alive, though, and stretched their arms and craned their heads, and the vivid flowers reached their luminous arms around rigid crags. Fiery snakes shot like arrows through the torrents, and deep on the floor of the sea sat mermaids, braiding star crowns through their raven curls, and the sea glittered and sparkled in magical light. It was a splendor like she had never seen before. Lotte was wholeheartedly happy for the entire day. However, when she came to the surface, she coincidentally looked into a forest where a young deer trotted cheerfully among the green trees, the birds sang softly, and the sun shone warm and cozy into the grove. “In the long run, it is a bit cool in the water,” thought Lotte. “I would rather be a deer!”

Lotte had barely spoken these words when the rose beetle, who was sitting by the sea, looked at her with fierce sparkling eyes and said, “Your wish is granted.” There stood Lotte as a deer in the green forest, which greatly pleased her. The streams trickled cheerfully over the rocks; the hunting horns sounded softly through the shrubbery, and the echoes answered with the sound of the mort. In the evening, by the light of the moon, the elves trekked through the forest, and the birch and beech trees gleamed. “There is nothing better than forest life,” thought Lotte for a full

twenty-four hours. If only the birds in the sky had not sung “Deer-Grump, Deer-Grump, high in the sky is the most beautiful place of all.” If only the fish had not whispered “Deer-Grump, Deer-Grump, deep in the sea is the most beautiful place of all.” If only envy had not eaten Grump’s heart.

Immediately, Deer-Lotte trotted to the beetle. “Rose beetle,” she said, “turn me into a creature that can fly, swim, and run all at once.” The beetle became black with anger and all its luster disappeared.

“Your wish is granted,” it said, “but you shall never see me again,” and it zipped through the air to another land where there were no grumps.

And Lotte? She had become a goose.

Now she could fly but only to the highest garden fence; now she could swim but only across a small, murky pond; and now she could walk, but she could only waddle across a meadow. She remained a goose for the rest of her life and could fly, swim, and walk, but how well?

1 From Hedwig Dohm, “Lotte Murrkopf,” in *Der Märchen Wundergarten*, ed. E. Berger (Berlin: N. B. Angersteins Jugendschriftenverlag, 1888), 80–85.

Part III

Fairy Tales and Feminism in Nineteenth-Century Great Britain

Introduction

Shandi Lynne Wagner

> The comparative studies and anthologies described above presuppose that the recovery of neglected fairy-tale texts by women will continue and that these texts will be made available in new editions and translations. Scholars like Blackwell and Jarvis are doing exemplary work within the field of German literary history, and the work of the French *conteuses* has certainly enjoyed a critical renaissance. Nonetheless, similar projects to resurrect women's fairy tales need to be undertaken in other cultural contexts and with the work of disregarded women writers and storytellers. While recovery work may reflect an earlier phase of feminist scholarship, in fairy-tale studies it remains an urgent desideratum. (Haase 29–30)

In *Feminism, Marriage, and the Law in Victorian England* (1989), Mary Lyndon Shanley explains her use of *feminist* to describe nineteenth-century activists: "Although the term *feminist* was not used until the late nineteenth century, it makes sense to apply it to the mid-century activists studied here [in her book], who urged the liberation of women from restrictive social custom and law alike" (3n2). In this anthology, we are making similar claims regarding the authors included here, who "urged the liberation of women from restrictive social custom" through their published fairy tales, specifically those customs surrounding ideals of femininity and marriage. In urging their readers to think critically about such social customs through their literary works, the influence of these women authors is comparable to that of the midcentury activists discussed by Shanley. Notably, several of the women writers presented in this section, such as Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary de Morgan, and George Egerton, were friends of feminist activists or were activists themselves.

These and other nineteenth-century British women authors used fairy-tale and folklore motifs in their published fiction to criticize social mores, in particular those surrounding domestic ideology and the institution of marriage. This pattern reveals that nineteenth-century British women authors found fairy tales, fairy-tale adaptations, and the incorporation of fairy-tale and folklore motifs to be tools that they could use to disperse

subversive, protofeminist social criticism. From well-known authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley to lesser known (and even mostly neglected) authors like Mary de Morgan, these women employ techniques in their fairy-tale writings that later become popularized in the twentieth century by feminist fairy-tale authors.

The act of composing a protofeminist fairy tale is in and of itself an act of subversion because the classic fairy tales in the tradition of Charles Perrault, Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, and the Brothers Grimm generally uphold the ideal of marriage as women's "happily ever after" as well as adhere to normative feminine and domestic ideology. In nineteenth-century Britain, the prevalent feminine ideal was that of the "Angel in the House," which called for a devoted and even angelic wife and mother who epitomized moral purity and modesty and who happily sacrificed her own desires and needs to care for her husband, children, and household. This ideal was directly connected to women's roles as wife and mother, and therefore to marriage, which "was deemed the apotheosis of womanly fulfilment" (Foster 6). As Shirley Foster explains, "Emotional and psychological pressures on women to marry were thus added to the social and economic ones of earlier periods, when it was understood that pragmatism would be a primary consideration of female matrimonial aspirations" (6). However, marriage added its own restrictions, as legally and economically a husband represented both himself and his wife.

While not all classic fairy tales feature passive, domesticated heroines or a marriage plot, the hypotexts adapted and revised by the authors included in this section, notably Perrault's "Cinderella," "Sleeping Beauty," "Bluebeard," and "Little Red Riding Hood," do. Similarly, while the following authors express protofeminist concerns in their authorship or revision of fairy tales, they do not necessarily share the same protofeminist ideals. Nevertheless, all the women and tales included in this section depart from the hegemonic fantasies that many classic tales in the tradition of Perrault perpetuate. They depict women who save their male partners with their activity, women who find fulfillment outside the domestic space and outside the roles of wife and mother, and women who refuse to wed and yet still live happy lives. They also present the tragic consequences that can occur when women do not realize that the promises in fairy tales are fantastic delusions: women who are so self-sacrificing that they die and women who refuse to recognize or abandon abusive marriages. These

authors show the impossibility of the ideal of the Angel in the House, of the devoted, self-sacrificing feminine woman who is absolutely and completely fulfilled by married life. They suggest that the men who presumably desire this feminine woman as wife in actuality would prefer a more active, more intelligent, and more outspoken kind of woman. Essentially, these authors advise their readers to be wary of the idealized fantasy perpetuated by classic fairy tales and domestic ideology, deconstructing the tales to better reflect the reality of the situation of (middle-class) women in nineteenth-century Great Britain.[1]

Notably, the audience for these fairy tales is not limited to children. The fairy-tale genre is associated with children's literature, and as Victorian children's literature, the fairy tale offered greater freedom of expression for British women authors. Nina Auerbach and U. C. Knoepflmacher write in *Forbidden Journeys* (1992), "Once women conformed outwardly [by adhering to Victorian society's stereotyped roles], an age still free of psychoanalytic suspicion exempted their emotions from close inspection" (1). Likewise, "children were perceived as secure in their innocence," so critics did not feel compelled to "expurgate anger, subversion, or literary experimentation from their reading" (2). However, it is significant that of the British authors included in this anthology, only one author, Mary de Morgan, was writing for an audience of children. Yet Roger Lancelyn Green's introduction to *The Complete Fairy Tales of Mary de Morgan* (1963) indicates that de Morgan's fairy tales were written with a dual audience of adults and children in mind, as he compiles records of her sharing her stories aloud at gatherings of children and adults alike. Although this may contradict our current conception of the fairy tale as children's literature, Sandra L. Beckett explains that "crosswriting," or writing for a dual audience, is part of the children's literature and even fairy-tale traditions:

> The art of crosswriting child and adult obviously is not a new phenomenon. Since the boundaries between adult and children's fiction were first drawn in the mid-eighteenth century, authors have been crosswriting them in both directions. The texts of even earlier authors, such as Charles Perrault, Jean de La Fontaine, Fénélon, John

> Bunyan, and Jonathan Swift, have traditionally a dual audience of children and adults. (xii)

While Mary de Morgan's dual audience can be connected to a fairy-tale tradition that includes seventeenth-century French authors such as Perrault and the fabulist La Fontaine, the other women authors discussed in this project can be associated with the seventeenth-century French *conteuses* in their adult audiences, and even Mary de Morgan shares stylistic traits with this female fairy-tale tradition.

The nineteenth century marked a time of great change for British women as well as a cultural period saturated by fairy tales. The country transformed over the century with a growing middle class, industrial revolution, increased literacy, class conflict, suffrage movements, and other advances and developments. Barbara Caine provides a succinct overview of the changing situation of women during the period:

> The "woman question" was a staple of nineteenth-century serious journals. In the early part of the century, interest centred on women's nature and appropriate activities, and on the characteristics of women as writers. By the middle of the century, the issues covered were becoming more extensive as questions about women's work, their political and legal rights, the need for reform of the marriage laws and of girls' education assumed greater and greater prominence. The problem with marriage and the advantages of female celibacy, domestic violence, the iniquities of the sexual double standard and of prostitution, the desires of women for ever greater independence were all matters written about in major journals. (102)

As Caine points out, these are the debates held in "serious journals," suggesting the significance of these debates over the situation of women. Lyn Pykett similarly observes that "women generally were the subject (or object) of a proliferation of legal discussion and legislation throughout the nineteenth century" (84). These discussions and legislations addressed concerns regarding women's rights in marriage, as mothers, as property owners, and in regard to their authority over their own bodies, among others (84). As both Caine and Pykett explain, women writers increasingly gained

a voice in these debates, whether through nonfiction published in the serious journals or through the publication of fiction. Pykett additionally suggests that male and female writers struggled to assert their own interpretation of womanhood:

> Nineteenth-century writing, by both men and women, was the site of a vigorous contest over who could represent Woman or women, and how Woman and women could be represented aesthetically, culturally and politically. Given their lack of political representation, and their inequitable legal and social position, participation in the cultural domain—and particularly writing—was one of the most significant ways in which nineteenth-century women could shape and change how they understood their own gender and sexuality, and how these were understood more generally. (79)

As the texts included here demonstrate, fairy tales represent one genre of fiction women authors used to participate in the debate over the representation of women as well as the conception of ideal femininity, an issue addressed by almost all the authors in the following tales.

It makes sense that women writers used the fairy tale to express their critique of society because the fairy tale pervaded Victorian culture following the early translations of French, German, and Dutch fairy tales. Molly Clark Hillard asserts that “reception of the tale can be measured by its very proliferation across the century, and its rising consumption as family entertainment. A well-rounded Victorian library would be rich in collections of fairy tales and fairy legends from Arabic, Italian, French, and German traditions, as well as from Britain itself. The fairy tale and legend were also widely adopted into other literary genres: the poetry, fiction, and drama of both popular and elite media” (2). Hillard further argues that fairy tales “provided a language through which authors and artists came to understand, represent, and contribute to social and political issues of the day. . . . Far from remaining a nostalgic, marginalized, or immaterial form, then, the fairy tale proved itself again and again to be fundamental to Victorian intellectual culture” (7). Current scholarship supports Hillard’s assertions, analyzing the fairy tale in relation to novelists such as Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, and Charlotte Brontë as well as to

fairy-tale authors like George MacDonald and Oscar Wilde. The women writers represented here similarly utilized the fairy tales to participate in Victorian intellectual life and its cultural discourse, even if covertly. Anne Thackeray Ritchie, for example, who was familiar with the fairy-tale tradition of the French *conteuses*, adopted the genre for its ability to convey subversive messages about femininity and marriage.

In addition to addressing feminist concerns, the tales included in this section employ three distinctive techniques that deserve attention: the use of narrative frames, the replacement of fantastical and magical elements with realistic interpretations, and the rejection of the "happily ever after" matrimonial conclusion. As Elizabeth Wanning Harries discusses in detail, the use of the narrative frame was a distinguishing characteristic of the French *conteuses*, who wrote complex fairy tales within larger frameworks, such as novels, in contrast to the concise, simple model produced by Perrault. Frequently, this framework replicated salon conversation. According to Harries, in creating such framework the *conteuses* "create[d] a new model of femininity: the woman who not only talks—by the fireside to children or in the salon—but also writes" (72). Several of the following tales include narrative frames, which are typically used to assure the reader that the embedded tale is indeed an accurate account of real events. Such frames can take the form of eyewitness testimony ("The Invisible Girl") or a letter published by the recipient ("Curious, if True"). The only frame that does not contribute to a sense of realism and veracity is that employed by Mary de Morgan in "The Seeds of Love." Like the French *conteuses*, de Morgan intriguingly encloses the first three tales of her first collection of fairy tales (*On a Pincushion*) with a frame narrative that situates the reader in a feminine space (the vanity) and confirms the oral origin of the tales that follow (as told by a brooch, a shawl pin, and a pin on the vanity). Narrative frames also effectively distance the author from the subversive content in the tale, providing some ironic distance that allows the author to evade moralistic judgment of publishers, critics, and readers.

The authors also create a more realistic narrative by moving away from the magic that characterizes tales by Perrault and especially a *conteuse* like d'Aulnoy. This move toward Realism is perhaps unsurprising given the nature of the frameworks used and discussed above, yet many writers rely on the fantastical nature of the genre to provide distance between the writer and any subversive messages communicated by the tale. Barzilai explains:

“Fairy tales have a basically paradoxical dimension: they dissimulate *and* disclose the truth; or, more accurately, disguise enables the transmission of the real-life privations, abuses, conflicts, and concerns that the tales unveil” (75). Despite this generic convention, many of the tales that follow notably do not use the realm of fantasy and indefinite land of magic to disguise their political and social commentary. Instead, the British women authors, with the exceptions of de Morgan and Rossetti, actively adapt the fairy-tale narrative to fit the rules of reality. In the case of some tale types, this disenchantment seems to function as a method of demonstrating the writer’s disillusionment with the idea of marriage as the sole avenue leading to women’s happiness and fulfillment. In reality, there is no magic or fairy to transform Cinderella’s appearance. Wolves are disguised as men and even husbands. Significantly, the tales have realistic and frequently specific settings, such as Ireland, Wales, and Paris. Finally, even when magic is present, as in de Morgan’s tales and Gaskell’s “Curious, if True,” its use does not secure or ensure a happy ending to the tale.

Perhaps the most significant technique used by many of the authors included here is the rejection of “happily ever after” and the marriage plot. Barbara Weiss explains the significance of “happily ever after” marriages to Victorians:

> The obligatory wedding as a happy ending to the complications of a plot was not of course unique to the Victorian novel. Marriage as the appropriate end of social comedy may be traced at least as far back as Roman comedy. But there has perhaps never been an age (or a literature) as relentlessly *pro* marriage as the Victorian period, in which a loving marriage is generally seen as the resolution to every social ill in the novel. This is all the more remarkable in the face of some very clear evidence that there was dawning in the nineteenth century the reluctant knowledge that the institution of marriage was seriously flawed. (67)

Weiss’s analysis looks at the works of canonical novelists such as Dickens and the Brontës, but “happily ever after” is even more obligatory an ending to classic fairy tales like “Cinderella,” “Sleeping Beauty,” and even “Bluebeard.” Significantly, however, marriage was one of the only

“professions” open to nineteenth-century middle-class women, even after a population imbalance halfway through the century left many women with little hope of marriage. Throughout the century women advocated for greater education and more options for fulfilling work outside of the domestic sphere, and many of the authors here suggested these changes were necessary in their fairy tales. They did so by highlighting the unhappiness women might find in marriage, especially to abusive husbands who legally controlled their every move. Some, like Landon and de Morgan, suggested even marriage to nonabusive husbands must be acknowledged to be less a “happily ever after” than a continuation of a life that will inevitably be characterized by conflict and difficult times. Only Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s fairy tale maintains the traditional conclusion of the wedding as happy ending. This disillusionment with “happily ever after” marriages is one way in which nineteenth-century women authors anticipate the techniques used by twentieth- and twenty-first-century feminist fairy-tale authors like Anne Sexton and Angela Carter.

When feminists in the 1970s began to criticize the fairy-tale genre, they focused on the effect classic fairy tales like “Cinderella,” “Sleeping Beauty,” and “Snow White” had on women’s ideas of gender roles and expectations of being rescued and wed by Prince Charming. In 1979, Karen E. Rowe asserted that classic fairy tales “glorify passivity, dependency, and self-sacrifice as a heroine’s cardinal virtues” (“Feminism and Fairy Tales” 210). In addition, Rowe argued that women “transfer from fairy tales into real life those fantasies which exalt acquiescence to male power and make marriage not simply one ideal, but the only estate toward which women should aspire” (211). As Rowe’s analysis indicates, canonical fairy tales emphasize the same qualities the 1870s British press advocated as “womanly,” including the supremely feminine virtue of self-sacrifice, while at the same time the tales insist on marriage and motherhood as women’s sole aspiration. While feminist fairy-tale criticism such as Rowe’s has been revised to incorporate both noncanonical tale types and fairy tales written by Victorian women authors like Anne Thackeray Ritchie, other Victorian women authors, who also used the fairy-tale genre to challenge pervasive cultural expectations in the nineteenth century, are still largely neglected. In addition, the protofeminist fairy-tale tradition in nineteenth-century Great Britain has been almost completely overlooked. The tales included here

show that nineteenth-century British women writers recognized the power of fantastic worlds and words to influence their culture and lives, and they chose to combat the influence of classic fairy tales by subverting them to communicate their own subversive ideals of female resourcefulness and independence. In doing so, they modeled those very qualities for their readers.

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Editor's note on style: Unlike the fairy tales of the French and German sections, which have been translated into modern English, the British tales included here still maintain their original nineteenth-century vocabulary. For this reason, additional footnotes have been included to help readers understand the more archaic and uncommon vocabulary. The original British spelling conventions have been maintained in the texts, but general spelling has been updated to follow modern usage (for example, "some one" to "someone," "to-day" to "today," "shew" to "show"). Punctuation has also been updated to follow current usage guidelines, in particular the use of commas, semicolons, hyphens, dashes, and italics; this includes breaking long sentences connected by multiple semicolons into separate sentences. In some instances, a footnote will indicate a change to the source text's word choice to assist reader understanding (such as "quoth" to "said"). Punctuation and word choice in the poems have not been changed; these texts therefore offer an example of nineteenth-century punctuation and diction.

1 Middle-class women are specified because working-class women by necessity worked outside the home as servants, factory workers, and so on.

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (1797–1851) was the daughter of radical political philosopher William Godwin and feminist Mary Wollstonecraft. Although Shelley would never know her mother, who died shortly after her birth, her literary parentage and upbringing are evident in the volume and variety of her publications as an author. Mary Shelley is best known today for her novel *Frankenstein* (1818), although she wrote prolifically throughout her adult life, including novels, travel books, biographical articles, and short stories. In addition, she worked to compile and edit the literary works of her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley, a poet and philosopher in his own right, following his death when Shelley was but twenty-four years old.

Some of Shelley's short stories were published in literary annuals, which were gift books illustrated with steel engravings and marketed as ideal gifts for young women (especially around the holiday seasons). Like many women writers, Mary Shelley took advantage of the lucrative nature of literary annuals in which she published contributions to support her family financially. As Judith Pascoe asserts, "Mary Shelley's letters to the editor of the *Keepsake* concenter most often on the issue of payment; clearly publication in these volumes held foremost importance for the opportunity it provided of earning money" (179). Yet this "financial motivation" does not mean that the fiction and poetry lacked literary value, for as Pascoe goes on to argue, "Mary Shelley clearly did not limit her annual publication to the sweepings of her desk but rather published work there that she counted as her very best" (180). While "The Invisible Girl" (1833) is the only one of Mary Shelley's literary annual contributions to adapt a fairy tale, it is notable that this adaptation is intriguingly protofeminist in its depiction of a resourceful Cinderella who is more than capable of surviving in the Welsh countryside on her own. In fact, Shelley's Cinderella not only manages to survive, but she also saves the life of her prince and the lives of several local fishermen. It is a Cinderella tale that suggests young unprotected middle-class women are capable of surviving and winning a

prince without magical aid. Shelley's tale features a strong and resourceful female heroine who saves herself and her beloved from misfortune.

Published in the 1833 *Keepsake*, Shelley's "The Invisible Girl" was commissioned to illustrate an engraving. As Kathryn Ledbetter explains, "*The Keepsake*'s elegant steel-plate engravings of English art were its main attraction" (41). Because most literary annuals were valued for their engravings more than their fiction, engravings were commissioned first and then distributed to authors for "illustration" in fiction. In "The Invisible Girl," the narrative frame details how the narrator came across a ruined tower in Wales only to find that inside the tower was furnished and decorated, complete with a portrait of a young woman titled "The Invisible Girl." Significantly, this portrait is the engraving that accompanied and inspired Shelley's short story, although it is titled "Rosina" in the literary annual after the name of Shelley's heroine. Gregory O'Dea notes this aspect of the narrative as well, writing that "'The Invisible Girl' makes use of the frame device with which Shelley was familiar and comfortable" and that Shelley "offers a clever solution [to the difficulty of writing a story to illustrate an engraving] by making the engraved image itself a principal object in the tale" (69).

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“The Invisible Girl” (1833)[1]

Edited by Shandi Lynne Wagner[2]

This slender narrative has no pretensions to the regularity of a story or the development of situations and feelings; it is but a slight sketch, delivered nearly as it was narrated to me by one of the humblest of the actors concerned. Nor will I spin out a circumstance interesting principally from its singularity and truth, but narrate, as concisely as I can, how I was surprised on visiting what seemed a ruined tower, crowning a bleak promontory overhanging the sea, that flows between Wales and Ireland, to find that though the exterior preserved all the savage rudeness that betokened many a war with the elements, the interior was fitted up somewhat in the guise of a summerhouse,[3] for it was too small to deserve any other name. It consisted but of the ground floor, which served as an entrance, and one room above, which was reached by a staircase made out of the thickness of the wall. The chamber was floored and carpeted, decorated with elegant furniture; and, above all, to attract the attention and excite curiosity, there hung over the chimneypiece—for to preserve the apartment from damp a fireplace had been built evidently since it had assumed a guise so dissimilar to the object of its construction—a picture simply painted in watercolours, which seemed more than any part of the adornments of the room to be at war with the rudeness[4] of the building, the solitude in which it was placed, and the desolation of the surrounding scenery. This drawing represented a lovely girl in the very pride and bloom of youth: her dress was simple, in the fashion of the day (remember, reader, I write at the beginning of the eighteenth century), her countenance was embellished by a look of mingled innocence and intelligence, to which was added the imprint of serenity of soul and natural cheerfulness. She was reading one of those folio romances, which have so long been the delight of the enthusiastic and young; her mandolin was at her feet—her parroquet[5] perched on a huge mirror near her. The arrangement of furniture and

hangings gave token of a luxurious dwelling, and her attire, also evidently that of home and privacy, yet bore with it an appearance of ease and girlish ornament, as if she wished to please. Beneath this picture was inscribed in golden letters “The Invisible Girl.”

Rambling about a country nearly uninhabited, having lost my way, and being overtaken by a shower, I had lighted on this dreary-looking tenement, which seemed to rock in the blast, and to be hung up there as the very symbol of desolation. I was gazing wistfully and cursing inwardly my stars which led me to a ruin that could afford no shelter, though the storms began to pelt more seriously than before, when I saw an old woman’s head popped out from a kind of loophole, and as suddenly withdrawn—a minute after a feminine voice called to me from within, and penetrating a little brambly maze that screened[6] a door, which I had not before observed, so skilfully had the planter succeeded in concealing art with nature, I found the good dame standing on the threshold and inviting me to take refuge within. “I had just come up from our cot[7] hard by,” she said, “to look after the things, as I do every day, when the rain came on—will ye walk up till it is over?” I was about to observe that the cot hard by, at the venture of a few rain drops, was better than a ruined tower, and to ask my kind hostess whether “the things” were pigeons or crows that she was come to look after, when the matting of the floor and the carpeting of the staircase struck my eye. I was still more surprised when I saw the room above, and beyond all, the picture and its singular inscription, naming her invisible, whom the painter had coloured forth into very agreeable visibility, awakened my most lively curiosity; the result of this, of my exceeding politeness towards the old woman, and her own natural garrulity,[8] was a kind of garbled narrative which my imagination eked out,[9] and future inquiries rectified, till it assumed the following form.

Painting by William Boxall. Engraving by J. C. Edwards. From Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, “The Invisible Girl,” in *The Keepsake for MDCCCXXXIII*, ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green & Longman, 1833).

Some years before in the afternoon of a September day, which, though tolerably fair, gave many tokens of a tempestuous evening, a gentleman arrived at a little coast town about ten miles from this place; he expressed his desire to hire a boat to carry him to the town of —— about fifteen miles further on the coast. The menaces which the sky held forth made the fishermen loath to venture, till at length two—one the father of a numerous family, bribed by the bountiful reward the stranger promised, the other the

son of my hostess, induced by youthful daring—agreed to undertake the voyage. The wind was fair, and they hoped to make good way before nightfall and to get into port ere the rising of the storm. They pushed off with good cheer, at least the fishermen did; as for the stranger, the deep mourning which he wore was not half so black as the melancholy that wrapt his mind. He looked as if he had never smiled—as if some unutterable thought, dark as night and bitter as death, had built its nest within his bosom, and brooded therein eternally; he did not mention his name, but one of the villagers recognised him as Henry Vernon, the son of a baronet who possessed a mansion about three miles distant from the town for which he was bound. This mansion was almost abandoned by the family, but Henry had, in a romantic fit, visited it about three years before, and Sir Peter had been down there during the previous spring for about a couple of months.

The boat did not make so much way as was expected; the breeze failed them as they got out to sea, and they were fain[10] with oar as well as sail to try to weather the promontory that jutted out between them and the spot they desired to reach. They were yet far distant when the shifting wind began to exert its strength and to blow with violent though unequal puffs. Night came on pitchy dark, and the howling waves rose and broke with frightful violence, menacing to overwhelm the tiny bark that dared resist their fury. They were forced to lower every sail and take to their oars; one man was obliged to bale out the water, and Vernon himself took an oar, and rowing with desperate energy equalled the force of the more practiced boatmen. There had been much talk between the sailors before the tempest came on; now, except a brief command, all were silent. One thought of his wife and children and silently cursed the caprice[11] of the stranger that endangered in its effects not only his life, but their[12] welfare; the other feared less, for he was a daring lad, but worked hard and had no time for speech, while Vernon, bitterly regretting the thoughtlessness which had made him cause others to share a peril, unimportant as far as he himself was concerned, now tried to cheer them with a voice full of animation and courage, and now pulled yet more strongly at the oar he held. The only person who did not seem wholly intent on the work he was about was the man who baled; every now and then he gazed intently round, as if the sea held afar off, on its tumultuous waste, some object that he strained his eyes to discern. But all was blank, except as the crests of the high waves showed themselves, or far out on the verge of the horizon, a kind of lifting of the

clouds betokened greater violence for the blast. At length he exclaimed —“Yes, I see it!—the larboard oar!—now! If we can make yonder light, we are saved!” Both the rowers instinctively turned their heads, but cheerless darkness answered their gaze.

“You cannot see it,” cried their companion, “but we are nearing it; and, please God, we shall outlive this night.” Soon he took the oar from Vernon’s hand, who, quite exhausted, was failing in his strokes. He rose and looked for the beacon which promised them safety; it glimmered with so fain a ray, that now he said, “I see it,” and again, “It is nothing.” Still, as they made way, it dawned upon his sight, growing more steady and distinct as it beamed across the lurid waters, which themselves became smoother, so that safety seemed to arise from the bosom of the ocean under the influence of that flickering gleam.

“What beacon is it that helps us at our need?” asked Vernon as the men, now able to manage their oars with greater ease, found breath to answer his question.

“A fairy one, I believe,” replied the elder sailor, “yet no less a true; it burns in an old tumble-down tower, built on the top of a rock which looks over the sea. We never saw it before this summer, and now each night it is to be seen—at least when it is looked for, for we cannot see it from our village—and it is such an out-of-the-way place that no one has need to go near it except through a chance like this. Some say it is burnt by witches, some say by smugglers; but this I know: two parties have been to search and found nothing but the bare walls of the tower. All is deserted by day and dark by night; for no light was to be seen while we were there, though it burned sprightly enough when we were out at sea.”

“I have heard say,” observed the younger sailor, “it is burnt by the ghost of a maiden who lost her sweetheart in these parts, he being wrecked, and his body found at the foot of the tower; she goes by the name among us of the ‘Invisible Girl.’”

The voyagers had now reached the landing place at the foot of the tower. Vernon cast a glance upward—the light was still burning. With some difficulty, struggling with the breakers[13] and blinded by night, they contrived to get their little bark to shore and to draw her up on the beach. They then scrambled up the precipitous pathway, overgrown by weeds and underwood, and guided by the more experienced fisherman, they found the

entrance to the tower; door or gate there was none, and all was dark as the tomb, and silent and almost as cold as death.

“This will never do,” said Vernon; “surely our hostess will show her light, if not herself, and guide our darkling steps by some sign of life and comfort.”

“We will get to the upper chamber,” said the sailor, “if I can but hit upon the broken down steps, but you will find no trace of the Invisible Girl nor her light either, I warrant.”

“Truly a romantic adventure of the most disagreeable kind,” muttered Vernon as he stumbled over the unequal ground. “She of the beacon light must be both ugly and old, or she would not be so peevish and inhospitable.”

With considerable difficulty, and after divers[14] knocks and bruises, the adventurers at length succeeded in reaching the upper story; but all was blank and bare, and they were fain to stretch themselves on the hard floor, when weariness, both of mind and body, conduced[15] to steep their senses in sleep.

Long and sound were the slumbers of the mariners. Vernon but forgot himself for an hour; then, throwing off drowsiness, and finding his rough couch uncongenial to repose, he got up and placed himself at the hole that served for a window, for glass there was none, and there being not even a rough bench, he leant his back against the embrasure,[16] as the only rest he could find. He had forgotten his danger, the mysterious beacon, and its invisible guardian; his thoughts were occupied on the horrors of his own fate and the unspeakable wretchedness that sat like a nightmare on his heart.

It would require a good-sized volume to relate the causes which had changed the once happy Vernon into the most woeful mourner that ever clung to the outer trappings of grief, as slight though cherished symbols of the wretchedness within. Henry was the only child of Sir Peter Vernon, and as much spoiled by his father’s idolatry as the old baronet’s violent and tyrannical temper would permit. A young orphan was educated in his father’s house, who in the same way was treated with generosity and kindness, and yet who lived in deep awe of Sir Peter’s authority, who was a widower; and these two children were all he had to exert his power over or to whom to extend his affection. Rosina was a cheerful-tempered girl, a little timid, and careful to avoid displeasing her protector, but so docile, so

kind-hearted, and so affectionate that she felt even less than Henry the discordant spirit of his parent. It is a tale often told: they were playmates and companions in childhood, and lovers in after days. Rosina was frightened to imagine that this secret affection, and the vows they pledged, might be disapproved of by Sir Peter. But sometimes she consoled herself by thinking that perhaps she was in reality her Henry's destined bride, brought up with him under the design of their future union; and Henry, while he felt that this was not the case, resolved to wait only until he was of age to declare and accomplish his wishes in making the sweet Rosina his wife. Meanwhile, he was careful to avoid premature discovery of his intentions, so to secure his beloved girl from persecution and insult. The old gentleman was very conveniently blind; he lived always in the country, and the lovers spent their lives together, unrebuked and uncontrolled. It was enough that Rosina played on her mandolin and sang Sir Peter to sleep every day after dinner; she was the sole female in the house above the rank of servant, and had her own way in the disposal of her time. Even when Sir Peter frowned, her innocent caresses and sweet voice were powerful to smooth the rough current of his temper. If ever human spirit lived in an earthly paradise, Rosina did at this time: her pure love was made happy by Henry's constant presence, and the confidence they felt in each other, and the security with which they looked forward to the future, rendered their path one of roses under a cloudless sky. Sir Peter was the slight drawback that only rendered their tête-à-tête more delightful and gave value to the sympathy they each bestowed on the other. All at once an ominous personage made its appearance in Vernon-Place, in the shape of a widow sister of Sir Peter, who, having succeeded in killing her husband and children with the effects of her vile temper, came, like a harpy[17] greedy for new prey, under her brother's roof. She too soon detected the attachment of the unsuspicious pair. She made all speed to impart her discovery to her brother and at once to restrain and inflame his rage. Through her contrivance Henry was suddenly dispatched[18] on his travels abroad, that the coast might be clear for the persecution of Rosina; and then the richest of the lovely girl's many admirers, whom, under Sir Peter's single reign, she was allowed, nay, almost commanded, to dismiss, so desirous was he of keeping her for his own comfort, was selected, and she was ordered to marry him. The scenes of violence to which she was now exposed, the bitter taunts of the odious Mrs. Bainbridge and the reckless fury of Sir Peter, were

the more frightful and overwhelming from their novelty. To all she could only oppose a silent, tearful, but immutable steadiness of purpose: no threats, no rage could extort from her more than a touching prayer that they would not hate her, because she could not obey.

“There must be something we don’t see under all this,” said Mrs. Bainbridge, “Take my word for it, brother—she corresponds secretly with Henry. Let us take her down to your seat in Wales, where she will have no pensioned beggars to assist her, and we shall see if her spirit be not bent to our purpose.”

Sir Peter consented, and they all three posted down to ——shire and took up their abode in the solitary and dreary-looking house before alluded to as belonging to the family. Here, poor Rosina’s sufferings grew intolerable; before, surrounded by well-known scenes and in perpetual intercourse with kind and familiar faces, she had not despaired in the end conquering by her patience the cruelty of her persecutors, nor had she written to Henry, for his name had not been mentioned by his relatives, nor their attachment alluded to, and she felt an instinctive wish to escape the dangers about her without his being annoyed, or the sacred secret of her love being laid bare and wronged by the vulgar abuse of his aunt or the bitter curses of his father. But when she was taken to Wales and made a prisoner in her apartment,[19] when the flinty mountains about her seemed feebly to imitate the stony hearts she had to deal with, her courage began to fail. The only attendant permitted to approach her was Mrs. Bainbridge’s maid; and under the tutelage of her fiend-like mistress, this woman was used as a decoy to entice the poor prisoner into confidence and then to be betrayed. The simple, kindhearted Rosina was a facile[20] dupe and, at last, in the excess of her despair, wrote to Henry and gave the letter to this woman to be forwarded. The letter itself would have softened marble; it did not speak of their mutual vows, it but asked him to intercede with his father, that he would restore her to the kind place she had formerly held in his affections, and cease from a cruelty that would destroy her. “For I may die,” wrote the hapless girl, “but marry another—never!” That single word, indeed, had sufficed to betray her secret, had it not been already discovered; as it was, it gave increased fury to Sir Peter, as his sister triumphantly pointed it out to him, for it need hardly be said that while the ink of the address was yet wet, and the seal still warm, Rosina’s letter was carried to this lady. The culprit

was summoned before them; what ensued none could tell; for their own sakes, the cruel pair tried to palliate[21] their part. Voices were high, and the soft murmur of Rosina's tone was lost in the howling of Sir Peter and the snarling of his sister. "Out of doors you shall go," roared the old man; "under my roof you shall not spend another night." And the words "infamous seductress," and worse, such as had never met the poor girl's ear before, were caught by listening servants; and to each angry speech of the baronet, Mrs. Bainbridge added an envenomed point worse than all.

More dead than alive, Rosina was at last dismissed. Whether guided by despair, whether she took Sir Peter's threats literally, or whether his sister's orders were more decisive, none knew, but Rosina left the house; a servant saw her cross the park, weeping and wringing her hands as she went. What became of her none could tell; her disappearance was not disclosed to Sir Peter till the following day, and then he showed by his anxiety to trace her steps and find her that his words had been but idle threats. The truth was that though Sir Peter went to frightful lengths to prevent the marriage of the heir of his house with the portionless[22] orphan, the object of his charity, yet in his heart he loved Rosina, and half his violence to her rose from anger at himself for treating her so ill. Now remorse began to sting him, as messenger after messenger came back without tidings of his victim; he dared not confess his worst fears to himself, and when his inhuman sister, trying to harden her conscience by angry words, cried, "The vile hussy has too surely made away with herself out of revenge to us," an oath, the most tremendous, and a look sufficient to make even her tremble, commanded her silence. Her conjecture, however, appeared too true; a dark and rushing stream that flowed at the extremity of the park had doubtless received the lovely form and quenched the life of this unfortunate girl. Sir Peter, when his endeavours to find her proved fruitless, returned to town, haunted by the image of his victim, and forced to acknowledge in his own heart that he would willingly lay down his life could he see her again, even though it were as the bride of his son—his son, before whose questioning he quailed like the veriest coward; for when Henry was told of the death of Rosina, he suddenly returned from abroad to ask the cause—to visit her grave and mourn her loss in the groves and valleys which had been the scenes of their mutual happiness. He made a thousand inquiries, and an ominous silence alone replied. Growing more earnest and more anxious, at length he drew from the servants and dependants, and his odious aunt herself, the whole

dreadful truth. From that moment, despair struck his heart, and misery named him her own. He fled from his father’s presence, and the recollection that one whom he ought to revere was guilty of so dark a crime haunted him, as of old the Eumenides[23] tormented the souls of men given up to their torturings. His first, his only, wish was to visit Wales and to learn if any new discovery had been made, and whether it were possible to recover the mortal remains of the lost Rosina, so to satisfy the unquiet longings of his miserable heart. On this expedition was he bound when he made his appearance at the village before named, and now in the deserted tower, his thoughts were busy with images of despair and death, and what his beloved one had suffered before her gentle nature had been goaded to such a deed of woe.

While immersed in gloomy reverie, to which the monotonous roaring of the sea made fit accompaniment, hours flew on, and Vernon was at last aware that the light of morning was creeping from out its eastern retreat and dawning over the wild ocean, which still broke in furious tumult on the rocky beach. His companions now roused themselves and prepared to depart. The food they had brought with them was damaged by seawater, and their hunger, after hard labour and many hours fasting, had become ravenous. It was impossible to put to sea in their shattered boat, but there stood a fisher’s cot about two miles off in a recess in the bay, of which the promontory on which the tower stood formed one side, and to this they hastened to repair; they did not spend a second thought on the light which had saved them, nor its cause, but left the ruin in search of a more hospitable asylum. Vernon cast his eyes round as he quitted it, but no vestige of an inhabitant met his eye, and he began to persuade himself that the beacon had been a creation of fancy merely. Arriving at the cottage in question, which was inhabited by a fisherman and his family, they made an homely breakfast and then prepared to return to the tower, to refit their boat, and, if possible, bring her round. Vernon accompanied them, together with their host and his son. Several questions were asked concerning the Invisible Girl and her light, each agreeing that the apparition was novel, and not one being able to give even an explanation of how the name had become affixed to the unknown cause of this singular appearance, though both of the men of the cottage affirmed that once or twice they had seen a female figure in the adjacent wood, and that now and then a stranger girl made her appearance at another cot a mile off, on the other side of the

promontory, and bought bread; they suspected both these to be the same but could not tell. The inhabitants of the cot, indeed, appeared too stupid even to feel curiosity and had never made any attempt at discovery. The whole day was spent by the sailors in repairing the boat, and the sound of hammers and the voices of the men at work resounded along the coast, mingled with the dashing of the waves. This was no time to explore the ruin for one who whether human or supernatural so evidently withdrew herself from intercourse with every living being. Vernon, however, went over the tower and searched every nook in vain; the dingy bare walls bore no token of serving as a shelter, and even a little recess in the wall of the staircase, which he had not before observed, was equally empty and desolate. Quitting the tower, he wandered in the pine wood that surrounded it and, giving up all thought of solving the mystery, was soon engrossed by thoughts that touched his heart more nearly, when suddenly there appeared on the ground at his feet the vision of a slipper. Since Cinderella[24] so tiny a slipper had never been seen; as plain as shoe could speak, it told a tale of elegance, loveliness, and youth. Vernon picked it up; he had often admired Rosina's singularly small foot, and his first thought was a question whether this little slipper would have fitted it. It was very strange!—it must belong to the Invisible Girl. Then there was a fairy form that kindled that light, a form of such material substance that its foot needed to be shod; and yet how shod?—with kid so fine and of shape so exquisite that it exactly resembled such as Rosina wore! Again the recurrence of the image of the beloved dead came forcibly across him, and a thousand homefelt[25] associations, childish yet sweet, and lover-like though trifling, so filled Vernon's heart that he threw his length on the ground and wept more bitterly than ever the miserable fate of the sweet orphan.

In the evening, the men quitted their work, and Vernon returned with them to the cot where they were to sleep, intending to pursue their voyage, weather permitting, the following morning. Vernon said nothing of his slipper but returned with his rough associates. Often he looked back, but the tower rose darkly over the dim waves, and no light appeared. Preparations had been made in the cot for their accommodation, and the only bed in it was offered to Vernon, but he refused to deprive his hostess and, spreading his cloak on a heap of dry leaves, endeavored to give himself up to repose. He slept for some hours, and when he awoke, all was still, save that the hard breathing of the sleepers in the same room with him interrupted the

silence. He rose and, going to the window, looked out over the now placid sea towards the mystic tower; the light was burning there, sending its slender rays across the waves. Congratulating himself on a circumstance he had not anticipated, Vernon softly left the cottage and, wrapping his cloak around him, walked with a swift pace round the bay towards the tower. He reached it; still the light was burning. To enter and restore the maiden her shoe would be but an act of courtesy, and Vernon intended to do this with such caution, as to come unaware, before its wearer could, with her accustomed arts, withdraw herself from his eyes; but, unluckily, while yet making his way up the narrow pathway, his foot dislodged a loose fragment that fell with crash and sound down the precipice. He sprung forward on this, to retrieve by speed the advantage he had lost by this unlucky accident. He reached the door; he entered: all was silent, but also all was dark. He paused in the room below; he felt sure that a slight sound met his ear. He ascended the steps and entered the upper chamber, but blank obscurity met his penetrating gaze; the starless night admitted not even a twilight of glimmer through the only aperture. He closed his eyes to try, on opening them again, to be able to catch some faint, wandering ray on the visual nerve, but it was in vain. He groped round the room, he stood still and held his breath, and then, listening intently, he felt sure that another occupied the chamber with him and that its atmosphere was slightly agitated by another's respiration. He remembered the recess in the staircase, but before he approached it, he spoke—he hesitated a moment what to say. "I must believe," he said, "that misfortune alone can cause your seclusion, and if the assistance of a man—of a gentleman—"

An exclamation interrupted him; a voice from the grave spoke his name—the accents of Rosina syllabled, "Henry!—is it indeed Henry whom I hear?"

He rushed forward, directed by the sound, and clasped in his arms the living form of his own lamented girl—his own Invisible Girl he called her; for even yet, as he felt her heart beat near his, and as he entwined her waist with his arm, supporting her as she almost sank to the ground with agitation, he could not see her, and as her sobs prevented her speech, no sense but the instinctive one that filled his heart with tumultuous gladness told him that the slender, wasted form he pressed so fondly was the living shadow of the Hebe[26] beauty he adored.

The morning saw this pair thus strangely restored to each other on the tranquil sea, sailing with a fair wind for L——, whence they were to proceed to Sir Peter’s seat, which, three months before, Rosina had quitted in such agony and terror. The morning light dispelled the shadows that had veiled her, and disclosed the fair person of the Invisible Girl. Altered indeed she was by suffering and woe, but still the same sweet smile played on her lips, and the tender light of her soft blue eyes were all her own. Vernon drew out the slipper and showed the cause that had occasioned him to resolve to discover the guardian of the mystic beacon; even now, he dared not inquire how she had existed in that desolate spot, or wherefore she had so sedulously avoided observation, when the right thing to have been done was to have sought him immediately, under whose care, protected by whose love, no danger need be feared. But Rosina shrunk from him as he spoke, and a deathlike pallor came over her cheek, as she faintly whispered, “Your father’s curse—your father’s dreadful threats!” It appeared, indeed, that Sir Peter’s violence and the cruelty of Mrs. Bainbridge had succeeded in impressing Rosina with a wild and unvanquishable terror. She had fled from their house without plan or forethought—driven by frantic horror and overwhelming fear, she had left it with scarcely any money, and there seemed to her no possibility of either returning or proceeding onward. She had no friend except Henry in the wide world; whither could she go? To have sought Henry would have sealed their fates to misery, for, with an oath, Sir Peter had declared he would rather see them both in their coffins than married. After wandering about, hiding by day, and only venturing forth at night, she had come to this deserted tower, which seemed a place of refuge. How she had lived since then she could hardly tell—she had lingered in the woods by day or slept in the vault of the tower, an asylum none were acquainted with or had discovered; by night, she burned the pine cones of the wood, and night was her dearest time, for it seemed to her as if security came with darkness. She was unaware that Sir Peter had left that part of the country and was terrified lest her hiding place should be revealed to him. Her only hope was that Henry would return—that Henry would never rest till he had found her. She confessed that the long interval and the approach of winter had visited her with dismay; she feared that, as her strength was failing and her form wasting to a skeleton, that [*sic*] she might die and never see her own Henry more.

An illness, indeed, in spite of all his care, followed her restoration to security and the comforts of civilized life; many months went by before the bloom revisiting her cheeks, and her limbs regaining their roundness, she resembled once more the picture drawn of her in her days of bliss, before any visitation of sorrow. It was a copy of this portrait that decorated the tower, the scene of her suffering, in which I had found shelter. Sir Peter, overjoyed to be relieved from the pangs of remorse, and delighted again to see his orphan-ward, whom he really loved, was now as eager as before he had been averse to bless her union with his son. Mrs. Bainbridge they never saw again. But each year they spent a few months in their Welch mansion, the scene of their early wedded happiness, and the spot where again poor Rosina had awoke to life and joy after her cruel persecutions. Henry's fond care had fitted up the tower and decorated it as I saw; and often did he come over, with his "Invisible Girl," to renew, in the very scene of its occurrence, the remembrance of all the incidents which had led to their meeting again, during the shades of night, in that sequestered ruin.

1 From Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, "The Invisible Girl," in *The Keepsake for MDCCCXXXIII*, ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green & Longman, 1833), 210–27.

2 Shandi Lynne Wagner edited all the texts in the British section.

3 A cottage or small house, typically located in a garden or park, that is used for sitting in during the summer months.

4 Roughness or simplicity.

5 A term used for any small, slender parrots, typically characterized by a long tail, brightly colored feathers, short hooked beaks, and an ability to mimic speech.

6 Source text used the spelling *skreened*; all changes to the source text are mine.

7 A small, rustic cottage.

8 Excessive talkativeness.

9 Just barely obtain or create.

10 Compelled by the circumstances (in this case the lack of breeze).

11 A sudden and unaccountable change of mood or behavior; an impulse or urge.

12 *Their* refers to the sailor's wife and children.

13 A heavy sea wave that breaks into white foam on the shore.

14 Several or of varying types.

15 Helped bring about.

16 A small opening in the parapet (low, protective wall along the edge of a roof, bridge, or balcony) of a fortified building, becoming wider on the inside.

17 A grasping, unpleasant woman; literally, a (capitalized) Harpy is a supernatural monster that looks like a bird of prey with the head and face of a woman.

18 Source text used the spelling *despatched*.

19 A suite or set of rooms in a very large house set aside for the use of a specific person.

20 Easy, effortless.

21 Disguise the seriousness or gravity of an offense.

22 In this context, a woman without a dowry. A dowry is property or money that a bride (or the bride's family) gives to her husband upon their marriage.

23 Also known as the Furies, the Eumenides were the Greek goddesses of vengeance.

24 This is the only reference to Cinderella in the entire narrative, yet its reference here ensures the readers recognition of the tale of Rosina as a Cinderella tale.

25 Heartfelt; felt deeply and strongly. The use of *homefelt* emphasizes that this is Vernon's return to the country home where he previously spent so many happy times with Rosina.

26 Hebe was the Greek goddess of youth.

Letitia Elizabeth Landon

Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1802–38) wrote prolifically and in a variety of genres, as F. J. Sypher details: “seventeen or more volumes of poetry (plus a sizeable amount of uncollected verse); three lengthy novels (and part of a fourth novel); dozens of short stories; countless critical articles and reviews (mostly anonymous, and unidentified); a drama; and innumerable letters (many remain unpublished and untraced)” (10). Her first poem was published in the *Literary Gazette* in 1820, when she was just eighteen. She published under her initials, L. E. L., and as her popularity grew, the mystery surrounding her identity contributed to her popularity, as did the eventual revelation that she was a beautiful young woman. Her reputation would be plagued by rumors of sexual affairs, particularly with the editor of the *Literary Gazette*, and illegitimate children, which scholars like Cynthia Lawford have since found evidence to support. In 1838, she married George Maclean, governor of the Gold Coast, and moved to Cape Coast, Africa, with him. A couple of months after her arrival in Africa, Landon was found dead in her room with a bottle of prussic acid. It was never discovered if her death was due to an accidental overdose (prussic acid was used as a medication in small doses), intentional poisoning (suicide or murder), or another unknown cause.

Until her marriage in 1838, Landon supported herself, her brother, and her mother with her literary production; earning money was her focus, although she also enjoyed writing, referring to her poetry composition as “the most subtle and interesting of pleasures” (Landon, *Letters* 168). Like Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Landon found the literary annual to be a particularly lucrative genre in which to publish. As Glennis Stephenson writes, “For Landon, working for the annuals was first and foremost a way to make a living” (156). Acting as both author and editor, Letitia Elizabeth Landon helped produce numerous literary annuals during her career, and this production included the composition and publication of her fairy-tale adaptation “The Sleeping Beauty,” published in the 1837 *Forget Me Not*. Like Shelley’s “The Invisible Girl,” Landon’s poem was written to illustrate

an engraving; yet unlike Shelley's story, Landon's poem criticizes the idealization of marriage as women's happy destiny.

“The Sleeping Beauty” (1837)[1]

Sleep with honey-dews hath bound her,
    Sleep unwaked by day;
Through the forest growing round her
    None may take their way,
For it is a path forbidden
    By the words of power;
There the beauty must be hidden
    Till the appointed hour;
Till the young deliverer cometh,
And the maiden life resumeth.

Purple fruit and golden chalice
    Lie upon the floor;
For, in that enchanted palace,
    All is as before.
There still is the censer burning,
    With its perfumed flame;
Years on many years returning,
    See it still the same;
It will burn till light re-living
In those closed eyes quench its giving.

There her ivory lute,[2] too, slumbers
    On the haunted ground,
Silent are its once sweet numbers,
    Like all things around;
On her cheek the rose is breathing

With its softest red;
And the auburn hair is wreathing
Round the graceful head:
Changeth not that rosy shade,
Stirreth not that auburn braid.

Hath the wild west wind then only
Leave to come and weep?
Is the lovely one left lonely
To her charmed sleep?
No, when yon full moon has risen
O’er the azure lake,
Cometh one to that sweet prison
For the sleeper’s sake;
On that only moonlit hour
Hath the gentle fairy power.

Then she calls fair spirits nigh her,
Each one with a dream,
So with sweet thoughts to supply her,
And those shadows seem
Real as life, but that each vision
Hath a lovelier ray,
More etherial and elysian[3]
Than earth’s common day.
Human thoughts and feelings keep
Life in that enchanted sleep.

Soon o’er that dark pine and laurel[4]
Will a youth prevail:
Is there not a gentle moral

In that fairy tale?
Like that maiden’s sleep unwaking,
Slumbereth woman’s heart,
Till Love comes, that slumber breaking
For life’s loveliest part.
Ah, the heart which it must waken
Soon will mourn its rest forsaken!

Painting by J. Wood. Engraving by F. Bacon. From Letitia Elizabeth Landon, “The Sleeping Beauty,” in *Forget Me Not: A Christmas, New Year’s, and Birthday Present for MDCCCXXXVII*, ed. Frederic Shoberl (London: Ackermann, 1837).

1 From Letitia Elizabeth Landon, “The Sleeping Beauty,” in *Forget Me Not: A Christmas, New Year’s, and Birthday Present for MDCCCXXXVII*, ed. Frederic Shoberl (London: Ackermann, 1837), 263–65.

2 A lute is a stringed instrument with a pear-shaped body, similar to a guitar. It is often associated with classical Greece and the art of poetry. It can also be viewed as a symbol of harmony.

3 Ethereal and elysian both indicate a heavenly, blissful experience. Elysian refers to Elysium, which in classical mythology was the abode of the blessed after death.

4 A laurel wreath is a symbol of victory dating back to Greek mythology. It was awarded to the victor in both athletic competitions and poetic meets. Thus, the laurel is a symbol for the poet or

poetic achievement.

Elizabeth Gaskell

Elizabeth Gaskell (1810–1865) was a well-known Victorian novelist, biographer, and short story writer. Gaskell's works highlight social concerns, including those surrounding the treatment of the working class in the industrialized city of Manchester and the situation of women. Gaskell was very well connected in the London literary scene, publishing stories in Charles Dickens's and William Thackeray's periodicals ("Curious, if True" appeared in the first volume of Thackeray's *Cornhill Magazine* in 1860) and writing Charlotte Brontë's biography. She was also connected through friends with prominent participants in the midcentury women's rights movement, and although she was not a devoted advocate of the movement, she did actively support aspects of the movement and certainly was not opposed to the growth of women's rights in Victorian society and law. This support can be seen in her empowerment of women and depiction of the perilous situation of women in society in her literary works.

As "Curious, if True" demonstrates, Gaskell was familiar with many traditional fairy tales, in particular those by Charles Perrault and Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy. She was friends with Anne Thackeray Ritchie, who translated d'Aulnoy into English and published her own fairy-tale adaptations, in which she resituated classic French fairy tales into contemporary, magic-free settings. She was also friends with Mary Howitt, who translated Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales into English. It is likely Gaskell was also familiar with the fairy tales by the Grimm brothers, which were translated into English in 1823 by Edgar Taylor, as Gaskell had traveled to and set several stories in Germany as well.[1]

In "Curious, if True," Gaskell unites her interest in fairy tales with the gothic ghost stories she also loved. Stumbling on a mansion in the countryside of France, the main character of the story enters a gathering of classic fairy-tale characters, including Sleeping Beauty and Cinderella, sees the ghost of Little Red Riding Hood, and ultimately awakes abruptly following the arrival of the fairy godmother. Gaskell leaves it up to the reader to decide if the event actually occurred or if the main character was

dreaming all along. Yet in addition to merging the “real” world with the world of fairy tales, Gaskell also brings reality to the situation of the fairy-tale characters, whose marriages have continued past their “happily ever after” endings and who must deal with the conflicts associated with rising in station and the mixing of traditionally strictly separated social classes.

1 For more information about Gaskell’s connection to Germany, see Skrine.

“Curious, if True” (1860)[1]

(Extract from a Letter from Richard Whittingham, Esq.[2])

You were formerly so much amused at my pride in my descent from that sister of Calvin’s,[3] who married a Whittingham, Dean of Durham, that I doubt if you will be able to enter into the regard for my distinguished relation, that has led me to France, in order to examine registers and archives, which, I thought, might enable me to discover collateral descendants of the great reformer, with whom I might call cousins. I shall not tell you of my troubles and adventures in this research; you are not worthy to hear of them, but something so curious befell me one evening last August, that if I had not been perfectly certain I was wide awake, I might have taken it for a dream.

For the purpose I have named it was necessary that I should make Tours[4] my headquarters for a time. I had traced descendants of the Calvin family out of Normandy into the centre of France; but I found it was necessary to have a kind of permission from the bishop of the diocese before I could see certain family papers, which had fallen into the possession of the Church; and, as I had several English friends at Tours, I awaited the answer to my request to Monseigneur de —— at that town. I was ready to accept any invitation, but I received very few and was sometimes a little at a loss what to do with my evenings. The table d’hôte[5] was at five o’clock; I did not wish to go to the expense of a private sitting room, disliked the dinnery atmosphere of the salle à manger,[6] could not play either at pool or billiards, and the aspect of my fellow guests was unprepossessing enough to make me unwilling to enter into any tête-à-tête gamblings with them. So I usually rose from table early and tried to make the most of the remaining light of the August evenings in walking briskly off to explore the surrounding country; the middle of the day was too hot for this purpose and better employed in lounging on a bench in the Boulevards, lazily listening to the distant band, and noticing with equal laziness the faces and figures of the women who passed by.

One Thursday evening, the 18th of August it was, I think, I had gone farther than usual in my walk, and I found that it was later than I had imagined when I paused to turn back. I fancied I could make a round; I had enough notion of the direction in which I was to see that by turning up a narrow, straight lane to my left I should shorten my way back to Tours. And so I believe I should have done, could I have found an outlet at the right place, but field paths are almost unknown in that part of France, and my lane, stiff and straight as any street, and marked into terrible vanishing perspective by the regular row of poplars on each side, seemed interminable. Of course, night came on, and I was in darkness. In England I might have had a chance of seeing a light in some cottage only a field or two off and asking my way from the inhabitants, but here I could see no such welcome sight; indeed, I believe French peasants go to bed with the summer daylight, so if there were any habitations in the neighbourhood I never saw them. At last—I believe I must have walked two hours in the darkness—I saw the dusky outline of a wood on one side of the weariful lane, and impatiently careless of all forest laws and penalties for trespassers, I made my way to it, thinking that if the worst came to the worst, I could find some covert[7]—some shelter where I could lie down and rest, until the morning light gave me a chance of finding my way back to Tours. But the plantation, on the outskirts of what appeared to me a dense wood, was of young trees, too closely planted to be more than slender stems growing up to a good height, with scanty foliage on their summits. On I went towards the thicker forest, and once there I slackened my pace and began to look about me for a good lair. I was as dainty as Lochiel's grandchild, who made his grandsire indignant at the luxury of his pillow of snow:[8] this brake[9] was too full of brambles that felt damp with dew; there was no hurry, since I had given up all hope of passing the night between four walls; there were pepper-boxes and tourelles and what-not fantastically going up into the dim starlight. And more to the purpose still, though I could not see the details of the building that I was now facing, it was plain enough that there were lights in many windows, as if some great entertainment was going on.

"They are hospitable people at any rate," thought I. "Perhaps they will give me a bed. I don't suppose French *propriétaires*[10] have traps and horses quite as plentiful as English gentleman; but they are evidently having a large party, and some of their guests may be from Tours, and will give me a

cast back to the Lion d'Or.[11] I am not proud, and I am dog-tired. I am not above hanging on behind, if need be."

So, putting a little briskness and spirit into my walk, I went up to the door, which was standing open, most hospitably, and showing a large lighted hall, all hung round with spoils of the chase, armour, etc., the details of which I had not time to notice, for the instant I stood on the threshold a huge porter appeared, in a strange, old-fashioned dress, a kind of livery which well befitted the general appearance of the house. He asked me, in French (so curiously pronounced that I thought I had hit upon a new kind of patois[12]), my name, and whence I came. I thought he would not be much the wiser, still it was but civil to give it before I made my request for assistance; so in reply I said,

"My name is Whittingham—Richard Whittingham, an English gentleman, staying at ——." To my infinite surprise a light of pleased intelligence came over the giant's face; he made me a low bow, and said (still in the same curious dialect) that I was welcome, that I was long expected.

"Long expected!" What could the fellow mean? Had I stumbled on a nest of relations by John Calvin's side, who had heard of my genealogical inquiries and were gratified and interested by them? But I was too much pleased to be under shelter for the night to think it necessary to account for my agreeable reception before I enjoyed it. Just as he was opening the great heavy *battants*[13] of the door that led from the hall to the interior, he turned round and said,

"Apparently Monsieur le Géanquilleur[14] is not come with you."

"No! I am all alone; I have lost my way"—and I was going on with my explanation, when he, as if quite indifferent to it, led the way up a great stone staircase, as wide as many rooms, and having on each landing place massive iron wickets[15] in a heavy framework; these the porter unlocked with the solemn slowness of age. Indeed, a strange, mysterious awe of the centuries that had passed away since this château was built came over me as I waited for the turning of the ponderous keys in the ancient locks. I could almost have fancied that I heard a mighty rushing murmur (like the ceaseless sound of a distant sea, ebbing and flowing forever and forever) coming forth from the great vacant galleries that opened out on each side of the broad staircase and were to be dimly perceived in the darkness above

us. It was as if the voices of generations of men yet echoed and eddied in the silent air. It was strange, too, that my friend the porter going before me, ponderously infirm, with his feeble old hands striving in vain to keep the tall flambeau[16] he held steadily before him—strange, I say, that he was the only domestic I saw in the vast halls and passages or met with on the grand staircase. At length we stood before the gilded doors that led into the saloon where the family—or it might be the company, so great was the buzz of voices—was assembled. I would have remonstrated when I found he was going to introduce me, dusty and travel-smeared, in a morning costume that was not even my best, into this grand salon, with nobody knew how many ladies and gentlemen assembled, but the obstinate old man was evidently bent upon taking me straight to his master and paid no heed to my words.

The doors flew open, and I was ushered into a saloon curiously full of pale light, which did not culminate on any spot, nor proceed from any centre, nor flicker with any motion of the air, but filled every nook and corner, making all things deliciously distinct; different from our light of gas or candle, as is the difference between a clear southern atmosphere and that of our misty England.

At the first moment my arrival excited no attention; the apartment was so full of people, all intent on their own conversation. But my friend the porter went up to a handsome lady of middle age, richly attired in that antique manner which fashion has brought round again of late years, and, waiting first in an attitude of deep respect till her attention fell upon him, told her my name and something about me, as far as I could guess from the gestures of the one and the sudden glance of the eye of the other.

She immediately came towards me with the most friendly actions of greeting, even before she had advanced near enough to speak. Then—and was it not strange?—her words and accent were that of the commonest peasant of the country. Yet she herself looked high-bred and would have been dignified had she been a shade less restless, had her countenance worn a little less lively and inquisitive expression. I had been poking a good deal about the old parts of Tours and had had to understand the dialect of the people who dwelt in the Marché au Vendredi[17] and similar places, or I really should not have understood my handsome hostess, as she offered to present me to her husband, a henpecked, gentlemanly man, who was more quaintly attired than she in the very extreme of that style of dress. I thought

to myself that in France, as in England, it is the provincials[18] who carry fashion to such an excess as to become ridiculous.

However, he spoke (still in the patois) of his pleasure in making my acquaintance, and led me to a strange uneasy easy chair, much of a piece with the rest of the furniture, which might have taken its place without any anachronism by the side of that in the Hôtel Cluny.[19] Then again began the clatter of French voices, which my arrival had for an instant interrupted, and I had leisure to look about me. Opposite to me sat a very sweet-looking lady, who must have been a great beauty in her youth I should think, and would be charming in old age, from the sweetness or her countenance. She was, however, extremely fat, and on seeing her feet laid up before her on a cushion, I at once perceived that they were so swollen as to render her incapable of walking, which probably brought on her excessive embonpoint.[20] Her hands were plump and small, but rather coarse-grained in texture, not quite so clean as they might have been, and altogether not so aristocratic-looking as the charming face. Her dress was of superb black velvet, ermine-trimmed, with diamonds thrown all abroad over it.

Not far from her stood the least little man I had ever seen; of such admirable proportions no one could call him a dwarf, because with that word we usually associate something of deformity, but yet with an elfin look of shrewd, hard, worldly wisdom in his face that marred the impression which his delicate regular little features would otherwise have conveyed. Indeed, I do not think he was quite of equal rank with the rest of the company, for his dress was inappropriate to the occasion (and he apparently was an invited, while I was an involuntary guest); and one or two of his gestures and actions were more like the tricks of an uneducated rustic than anything else. To explain what I mean, his boots had evidently seen much service, and had been retopped, reheeled, resoled to the extent of cobbler’s powers. Why should he have come in them if they were not his best—his only pair? And what can be more ungenteel than poverty? Then again he had an uneasy trick of putting his hand up to his throat, as if he expected to find something the matter with it; and he had the awkward habit —which I do not think he could have copied from Dr. Johnson,[21] because most probably he had never heard of him—of trying always to retrace his steps on the exact boards on which he had trodden to arrive at any particular part of the room. Besides, to settle the question, I once heard him addressed

as Monsieur Poucet,[22] without any aristocratic “de” for a prefix; and nearly everyone else in the room was a marquis at any rate.

I say “nearly every one,” for some strange people had the entrée, unless indeed they were like me benighted.[23] One of the guests I should have taken for a servant but for the extraordinary influence he seemed to have over the man I took for his master, and who never did anything without, apparently, being urged thereto by this follower. The master, magnificently dressed, but ill at ease in his clothes, as if they had been made for someone else, was a weak-looking, handsome man, continually sauntering about, and I almost guessed an object of suspicion to some of the gentlemen present, which, perhaps, drove him on the companionship of his follower, who was dressed something in the style of an ambassador’s chasseur.[24] Yet it was not a chasseur’s dress after all; it was something more thoroughly old-world: boots halfway up his ridiculously small legs, which clattered as he walked along, as if they were too large for his little feet, and a great quantity of grey fur, as trimming to coat, court-mantle, boots, cap—everything. You know the way in which certain countenances remind you perpetually of some animal, be it bird or beast? Well, this chasseur (as I will call him for want of a better name) was exceedingly like the great Tom-cat that you have seen so often in my chambers, and laughed at almost as often for his uncanny gravity of demeanour. Grey whiskers has my Tom—grey whiskers had the chasseur: grey hair overshadows the upper lip of my Tom—grey mustachios hid that of the chasseur. The pupils of Tom’s eyes dilate and contract as I had thought cats’ pupils only could do, until I saw those of the chasseur. To be sure, canny as Tom is, the chasseur had the advantage in the more intelligent expression. He seemed to have obtained most complete sway over his master or patron, whose looks he watched, and whose steps he followed with a kind of distrustful interest that puzzled me greatly.

There were several other groups in the more distant part of the saloon, all the stately old school, all grand and noble, I conjectured from their bearing. They seemed perfectly well acquainted with each other, as if they were in the habit of meeting. But I was interrupted in my observations by the tiny little gentleman on the opposite side of the room coming across to take a place beside me. It is no difficult matter to a Frenchman to slide into conversation, and so gracefully did my pigmy friend keep up the character

of the nation, that we were almost confidential before ten minutes had elapsed.

Now I was quite aware that the welcome which all had extended to me, from the porter up to the vivacious lady and meek lord of the castle, was intended for some other person. But it required either a degree of moral courage, of which I cannot boast, or the self-reliance and conversational powers of a bolder and cleverer man than I, to undeceive people who had fallen into so fortunate a mistake for me. Yet the little man by my side insinuated himself so much into my confidence that I had half a mind to tell him of my exact situation and to turn him into a friend and an ally.

“Madame is perceptibly growing older,” said he in the midst of my perplexity, glancing at our hostess.

“Madame is still a very fine woman,” replied I.

“Now, is it not strange,” continued he, lowering his voice, “how women almost invariably praise the absent, or departed, as if they were angels of light, while as for the present, or the living”—here he shrugged up his little shoulders, and made an expressive pause. “Would you believe it! Madame is always praising her late husband to monsieur’s face, till, in fact, we guests are quite perplexed how to look: for you know, the late M. de Retz’s[25] character was quite notorious—everybody has heard of him.” All the world of Touraine,[26] thought I, but I made an assenting noise.

At this instant, monsieur our host came up to me and, with a civil look of tender interest (such as some people put on when they inquire after your mother, about whom they do not care one straw), asked if I had heard lately how my cat was. “How my cat was!” What could the man mean?[27] My cat! Could he mean the tailless Tom, born in the Isle of Man,[28] and now supposed to be keeping guard against the incursions of rats and mice into my chambers in London? Tom is, as you know, on pretty good terms with some of my friends, using their legs for rubbing posts without scruple, and highly esteemed by them for his gravity of demeanour and wise manner of winking his eyes. But could his fame have reached across the Channel? However, an answer must be returned to the inquiry, as monsieur’s face was bent down to mine with a look of polite anxiety; so I, in my turn, assumed an expression of gratitude, and assured him that, to the best of my belief, my cat was in remarkably good health.

“And the climate agrees with her?”

“Perfectly,” said I, in a maze of wonder at this deep solicitude in a tailless cat who had lost one foot and half an ear in some cruel trap. My host smiled a sweet smile and, addressing a few words to my little neighbour, passed on.

“How wearisome these aristocrats are!” said[29] my neighbour with a slight sneer. “Monsieur’s conversation rarely extends to more than two sentences to anyone. By that time his faculties are exhausted, and he needs the refreshment of silence. You and I, monsieur, are at any rate indebted to our own wits for our rise in the world!”

Here again I was bewildered! As you know, I am rather proud of my descent from families which, if not noble themselves, are allied to nobility —and as to my “rise in the world”—if I had risen, it would have been rather for balloon-like qualities than for mother-wit, to being unencumbered with heavy ballast[30] either in my head or my pockets. However, it was my cue to agree, so I smiled again.

“For my part,” said he, “if a man does not stick at trifles, if he knows how to judiciously add to, or withhold facts, and is not sentimental in his parade of humanity, he is sure to do well, sure to affix a ‘de’ or ‘von’ to his name,[31] and end his days in comfort. There is an example of what I am saying”—and he glanced furtively at the weak-looking master of the sharp, intelligent servant, whom I have called the chasseur.

“Monsieur le Marquis would never have been anything but a miller’s son if it had not been for the talents of his servant. Of course you know his antecedents?”

I was going to make some remarks on the changes in the order of the peerage since the days of Louis XVI—going, in fact, to be very sensible and historical—when there was a slight commotion among the people at the other end of the room. Lacqueys[32] in quaint liveries must have come in from behind the tapestry, I suppose (for I never saw them enter, though I sat[33] right opposite the doors), and were handing about the slight beverages and slighter viands which are considered sufficient refreshments, but which looked rather meagre to my hungry appetite. These footmen were standing solemnly opposite to a lady—beautiful, splendid as the dawn, but—sound asleep in a magnificent settee. A gentleman who showed so much irritation

at her ill-timed slumbers, that I think he must have been her husband, was trying to awaken her with actions not far removed from shakings. All in vain; she was quite unconscious of his annoyance, or the smiles of the company, or the automatic solemnity of the waiting footmen, or the perplexed anxiety of monsieur and madame.

My little friend sat down with a sneer as if his curiosity was quenched in contempt.

“Moralists would make an infinity of wise remarks on that scene,” said he. “In the first place note the ridiculous position into which their superstitious reverence for rank and title puts all these people. Because monsieur is a reigning prince over some minute principality the exact situation of which no one has as yet discovered, no one must venture to take their glass of *eau sucré*[34] till Madame la Princesse awakens; and, judging from past experience, those poor lacqueys may have to stand for a century before that happens. Next—always speaking as a moralist, you will observe—note how difficult it is to break off bad habits acquired in youth!”

Just then the prince succeeded, by what means I did not see, in awakening the beautiful sleeper. But at first she did not remember where she was, and looking up at her husband with loving eyes, she smiled and said,

“Is it you, my prince?”

But he was too conscious of the suppressed amusement of the spectators and his own consequent annoyance to be reciprocally tender, and turned away with some little French expression best rendered into English by “Pooh, my dear!”

After I had had a glass of delicious wine of some unknown quality, my courage was in rather better plight than before, and I told my cynical little neighbour—whom I must say I was beginning to dislike—that I had lost my way in the wood, and had arrived at the château quite by mistake.

He seemed mightily amused at my story, said that the same thing had happened to himself more than once, and told me that I had better luck than he had had on one of these occasions, when, from his account, he must have been in considerable danger of his life. He ended his story by making me admire his boots, which he said he still wore, patched though they were, and all their excellent quality lost by patching, because they were of such a

first-rate make for long pedestrian excursions. “Though indeed,” he wound up by saying, “the new fashion of railroads would seem to supersede the necessity for this description of boots.”

When I consulted him as to whether I ought to make myself known to my host and hostess as a benighted traveller, instead of the guest whom they had taken me for, he exclaimed, “By no means! I hate such squeamish morality.” And he seemed much offended by my innocent question, as if it seemed by implication to condemn something in himself. He was offended and silent, and just at this moment I caught the sweet, attractive eyes of the lady opposite—that lady whom I named at first as being no longer in the bloom of youth, but as being somewhat infirm about the feet, which were supported on a raised cushion before her. Her looks seemed to say, “Come here, and let us have some conversation together,” and with a bow of silent excuse to my little companion, I went across to the lame old lady. She acknowledged my coming with the prettiest gesture of thanks possible, and half-apologetically said, “It is a little dull to be unable to move about on such evenings as this, but it is a just punishment to me for my early vanities. My poor feet, that were by nature so small, are now taking their revenge for my cruelty in forcing them into such little slippers . . . Besides, monsieur”—with a pleasant smile—“I thought it was possible you might be weary of the malicious sayings of your little neighbour. He has not borne the best character in his youth, and such men are sure to be cynical in their old age.”

“Who is he?” asked I, with English abruptness.

“His name is Poucet, and his father was, I believe, a woodcutter, or charcoal burner, or something of the sort. They do tell sad stories of connivance at murder, ingratitude, and obtaining money on false pretences—but you will think me as bad as he if I go on with my slanders. Rather let us admire the lovely lady coming up towards us, with the roses in her hand—I never see her without roses, they are so closely connected with her past history, as you are doubtless aware. Ah, beauty!” said my companion to the lady drawing near to us, “it is like you to come to me, now that I can no longer go to you.” Then turning to me, and gracefully drawing me into the conversation, she said, “You must know that although we never met until we were both married, we have been almost like sisters ever since. There have been so many points of resemblance in our circumstances, and I think

I may say in our characters. We had each two elder sisters—mine were but half sisters, though—who were not so kind to us as they might have been."

"But have been sorry for it since," put in the other lady.

"Since we have married princes," continued the same lady with an arch smile that had nothing of unkindness in it, "for we both have married far above our original stations in life; we are both unpunctual in our habits, and in consequence of this failing of ours we have both had to suffer mortification and pain."

"And both are charming," said a whisper close behind me. "My lord, the marquis, say it—say, 'And both are charming.'"

"And both are charming," was spoken aloud by another voice. I turned and saw the wily cat-like chasseur, prompting his master to make civil speeches.

The ladies bowed with that kind of haughty acknowledgment which shows that compliments from such a source are distasteful. But our trio of conversation was broken up, and I was sorry for it. The marquis looked as if he had been stirred up to make that one speech, and hoped that he would not be expected to say more, while behind him stood the chasseur, half-impertinent and half-servile in his ways and attitudes. The ladies, who were real ladies, seemed to be sorry for the awkwardness of the marquis and addressed some trifling questions to him, adapting themselves to the subjects on which he could have no trouble in answering. The chasseur, meanwhile, was talking to himself in a growling tone of voice. I had fallen a little into the background at this interruption in a conversation which promised to be so pleasant, and I could not help hearing his words.

"Really, De Carabas[35] grows more stupid every day. I have a great mind to throw off his boots and leave him to his fate. I was intended for a court, and to a court I will go, and make my own fortune as I have made his. The emperor will appreciate my talents."

And such are the habits of the French, or such his forgetfulness of good manners in his anger, that he spat right and left on the parquetted floor.

Just then a very ugly, very pleasant-looking man came towards the two ladies to whom I had lately been speaking, leading up to them a delicate fair woman dressed all in the softest white, as if she were *vouée au blanc*.[36] I do not think there was a bit of colour about her. I thought I heard her making,

as she came along, a little noise of pleasure, not exactly like the singing of a teakettle, nor yet like the cooing of a dove, but reminding me of each sound.

"Madame de Mioumiou[37] was anxious to see you," said he, addressing the lady with the roses, "so I have brought her across to give you a pleasure!" What an honest good face! But, oh! How ugly! And yet I liked his ugliness better than most persons' beauty. There was a look of pathetic acknowledgment of his ugliness, and a deprecation of your too hasty judgment, in his countenance that was positively winning. The soft white lady kept glancing at my neighbour, the chasseur, as if they had had some former acquaintance, which puzzled me very much, as they were of such different rank. However, their nerves were evidently strung to the same tune, for at a sound behind the tapestry, which was more like the scuttering of rats and mice than anything else, both Madame de Mioumiou and the chasseur started with the most eager look of anxiety on their countenances, and by their restless movements—madame's panting and the fiery dilation of his eyes—one might see that commonplace sounds affected them both in a manner very different to the rest of the company. The ugly husband of the lovely lady with the roses now addressed himself to me.

"We are much disappointed," he said, "in finding that monsieur is not accompanied by his countryman—le grand Jean d'Angleterre;[38] I cannot pronounce his name rightly"—and he looked at me to help him out.

"Le grand Jean d'Angleterre!" Now who was le grand Jean d'Angleterre? John Bull? John Russell? John Bright?[39]

"Jean—Jean," continued the gentleman, seeing my embarrassment. "Ah, these terrible English names—'Jean the Géanquilleur!'"

I was as wise as ever. And yet the name struck me as familiar, but slightly disguised. I repeated it to myself. It was mighty like John the Giant-killer, only his friends always call that worthy "Jack." I said the name aloud.

"Ah, that is it!" said he. "But why has he not accompanied you to our little reunion tonight?"

I had been rather puzzled once or twice before, but this serious question added considerably to my perplexity. Jack the Giant-killer had once, it is true, been rather an intimate friend of mine, as far as (printer's) ink and paper can keep up a friendship, but I had not heard his name mentioned for years, and for aught I knew he lay enchanted with King Arthur's knights,

who lie entranced until the blast of the trumpets of four mighty kings shall call them to help at England's need.[40] But the question had been asked in serious earnest by that gentleman, whom I more wished to think well of me than I did any other person in the room. So I answered respectfully that it was long since I had heard anything of my countryman, but that I was sure it would have given him as much pleasure as it was doing myself to have been present at such an agreeable gathering of friends. He bowed, and then the lame lady took up the word.

"Tonight is the night when, of all the year, this great old forest surrounding the castle is said to be haunted by the phantom of a little peasant girl who once lived hereabouts; the tradition is that she was devoured by a wolf. In former days I have seen her on this night out of yonder window at the end of the gallery. Will you, ma belle,[41] take monsieur to see the view outside by moonlight (you may possibly see the phantom-child) and leave me to a little tête-à-tête with your husband?"

With a gentle movement the lady with the roses complied with the other's request, and we went to a great window, looking down on the forest, in which I had lost my way. The tops of the far-spreading and leafy trees lay motionless beneath us in that pale, wan light, which shows objects almost as distinct in form, though not in colour, as by day. We looked down on the countless avenues, which seemed to converge from all quarters to the great old castle, and suddenly across one, quite near to us, there passed the figure of a little girl, with the "capuchin"[42] on, that takes the place of a peasant girl's bonnet in France. She had a basket on one arm, and by her, on the side to which her head was turned, there went a wolf. I could almost have said it was licking her hand, as if in penitent love, if either penitence or love had ever been a quality of wolves—but though not of living, perhaps it may be of phantom wolves.

"There, we have seen her!" exclaimed my beautiful companion. "Though so long dead, her simple story of household goodness and trustful simplicity still lingers in the hearts of all who have ever heard of her, and the country people about here say that seeing that phantom-child on this anniversary brings good luck for the year. Let us hope that we shall share in the traditionary good fortune. Ah! Here is Madame de Retz—she retains the name of her first husband, you know, as he was of higher rank than the present." We were joined by our hostess.

“If monsieur is fond of the beauties of nature and art,” said she, perceiving that I had been looking at the view from the great window, “he will perhaps take pleasure in seeing the picture.” Here she sighed, with a little affectation of grief. “You know that picture I allude to,” addressing my companion, who bowed assent, and smiled a little maliciously, as I followed the lead of madame.

I went after her to the other end of the saloon, noting by the way with what keen curiosity she caught up what was passing either in word or action on each side of her. When we stood opposite to the end wall, I perceived a full-length picture of a handsome peculiar-looking man, with—in spite of his good looks—a very fierce and scowling expression. My hostess clasped her hands together as her arms hung down in front, and sighed once more. Then, half in soliloquy, she said,

“He was the love of my youth; his stern yet manly character first touched this heart of mine. When—when shall I cease to deplore his loss?”

Not being acquainted with her enough to answer this question (if, indeed, it were not sufficiently answered by the fact of her second marriage), I felt awkward, and by way of saying something, I remarked,

“The countenance strikes me as resembling something I have seen before—in an engraving from an historical picture, I think; only, it is there the principal figure in a group: he is holding a lady by her hair and threatening her with his scimitar, while two cavaliers are rushing up the stairs, apparently only just in time to save her life.”

“Alas, alas!” said she, “you too accurately describe a miserable passage in my life, which had often been represented in a false light. The best of husbands”—here she sobbed and became slightly inarticulate with her grief—“will sometimes be displeased. I was young and curious, he was justly angry with my disobedience—my brothers were too hasty—the consequence is, I became a widow!”

After due respect for her tears, I ventured to suggest some commonplace consolation. She turned round sharply—

“No, monsieur: my only comfort is that I have never forgiven the brothers who interfered so cruelly, in such an uncalled-for manner, between my dear husband and myself. To quote my friend Monsieur Sganarelle—‘Ce sont petites choses qui sont de temps en temps nécessaires dans l’amitié; et cinq ou six coups d’épée entre gens qui s’aiment ne font que

ragaillardir l'affection.'[43] You observe the colouring is not quite what it should be?"

"In this light the beard is of rather a peculiar tint," said I.

"Yes, the painter did not do it justice. It was most lovely, and gave him such a distinguished air, quite different from the common herd. Stay, I will show you the exact colour, if you will come near this flambeau!" And going near the light, she took off a bracelet of hair, with a magnificent clasp of pearls. It was peculiar, certainly. I did not know what to say. "His precious lovely beard!" said she. "And the pearls go so well with the delicate blue!"

Her husband, who had come up to us, and waited till her eye fell upon him before venturing to speak, now said, "It is strange Monsieur Ogre is not yet arrived!"

"Not at all strange," said she tartly. "He was always very stupid, and constantly falls into mistakes, in which he comes worse off; and it is very well he does, for he is a credulous and cowardly fellow. Not at all strange! If you will"—turning to her husband, so that I hardly heard her words, until I caught—"Then everybody would have their rights, and we should have no more trouble. Is it not, monsieur?" addressing me.

"If I were in England, I should imagine madame was speaking of the reform bill, or the millennium—but I am in ignorance."

And just as I spoke, the great folding doors were thrown open wide, and everyone started to their feet to greet a little old lady, leaning on a thin black wand—and—

"Madame la Féemarraine,"[44] was announced by a chorus of sweet shrill voices.

And in a moment I was lying in the grass close by a hollow oak tree, with the slanting glory of the dawning day shining full in my face, and thousands of little birds and delicate insects piping and warbling out their welcome to the ruddy splendour.

1 From Elizabeth Gaskell, "Curious, if True." *Cornhill Magazine* (Smith, Elder, 1860), 1:208–19.

2 An abbreviation for esquire, which in Great Britain is a polite title appended to a man's name when no other title is used, typically in the address of a letter or other documents. This subtitle is included in the source text as it appears here (in all caps).

3 John Calvin (1509–64) was a French theologian and religious reformer. Calvin played a major role in the Protestant Reformation, which established Protestantism as a major branch of Christianity.

4 A city in west-central France along the Loire River; the Loire valley is known for its historic châteaus.

5 A meal or food that is served in a restaurant as a complete meal at a fixed price but with little choice of dishes; it is the opposite of dining à la carte, in which a wide variety of courses are priced separately.

6 Dining room.

7 A thicket or hiding place covered over by vegetation.

8 Lochiel is a term used to refer to the chief of the Scottish Highland Clan Cameron. According to Sir Walter Scott in *A Legend of Montrose*, those of "that ancient race of Highlanders . . . considered it as effeminate luxury to use a snowball for a pillow." This may be a reference specifically to Ewen Cameron of Lochiel (1629–1719), the seventeenth chief of the clan who was recognized for his strength and ability in battle; his grandson Donald Cameron of Lochiel (1700–1748) was known as the "Gentle Lochiel" in Scottish folklore.

9 An archaic term for thicket.

10 French for owners or landlords.

11 A ride back to his hotel, the Lion d'Or.

12 The dialect of the common people of a region; this differs in various ways from the standard language of the rest of the country.

13 French for "leaves" or "panels," as in the leaves or panels of the door.

14 In French pronunciation, this is the equivalent of "the Giant-killer."

15 A door or gate.

16 A flaming torch or a large candlestick with many branches.

17 The literal translation is "Market of Friday"; in this context, it is likely referring to a market, square, or neighborhood.

18 The inhabitants of the regions outside the capital or major city of a country. This term suggests these inhabitants are unsophisticated or narrow minded, unlike the sophisticated inhabitants of major cities.

19 Originally constructed as a temporary residence for the abbots of the Cluny order and their guests in 1480, in the nineteenth century the hotel was converted into a museum for objects, artwork, and furniture of the Middle Ages.

20 Corpulence or obesity.

21 Samuel Johnson (1709–84), also known as Dr. Johnson, was a prolific and renowned English writer of fiction and nonfiction, including *A Dictionary of the English Language*. His tics and obsessive-compulsive behavior are documented by various sources.

22 Little Poucet, also known as Hop-o'-My-Thumb or Little Thumb, is the main character in one of the French fairy tales by Charles Perrault, published in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (1697). In the fairy tale, Little Poucet is a small boy, the youngest son of seven in the family of a poor woodcutter, who cleverly steals magic seven-league boots from an ogre while he sleeps.

23 Overtaken by darkness during his walk.

24 Attendant or servant.

25 Gille de Retz or Gille de Rais (1405–40) was Baron de Rais and is believed to be the inspiration for Perrault's "Bluebeard," a fairy tale published in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (1697). In the fairy tale, Bluebeard marries and then murders wife after wife; however, the historical Baron de Rais was executed following accusations of sexual and violent crimes against children.

26 This was one of the traditional provinces of France; its capital was Tours.

27 The narrator, Richard Whittingham, has been mistaken for Richard Whittington (1354–1423), a merchant who later became lord mayor of London and who was the real-life inspiration for the English folktale “Dick Whittington and His Cat,” which tells the story of how a poor boy makes his fortune thanks to the services of his mouse-hunting cat.

28 A self-governing island located in the Irish sea between England and Ireland.

29 Source text uses the word *quoth*.

30 A heavy substance used to control the buoyancy of a balloon.

31 The addition of *de* or *von* to the beginning of the last name is traditionally an indicator of nobility; they are known as nobiliary particles.

32 Also spelled lackey, a lacquey is a uniformed servant, like a footman.

33 Source text uses the word *sate*.

34 Sweet or sugar water, sometimes flavored with fruit and honey (like lemonade).

35 De Carabas is the main character of Perrault’s fairy tale “Puss in Boots,” published in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (1697), in which a poor miller’s son inherits a cat whose cleverness and industry helps him impersonate a nobleman (the Marquis De Carabas) to impress a king and, in doing so, gain the princess’s hand in marriage. A marquis is a nobleman of high hereditary rank. For instance, in Great Britain, a marquis is ranked below a duke and above an earl.

36 French, meaning “dedicated to God,” especially in reference to a young virgin who is being given to God and is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. A French custom was for parents to vow to dress their children in only white or blue, the colors associated with the Virgin Mary, in honor of and to receive the protection of the Virgin Mary.

37 In French, *miaou* means “meow,” the sound a cat makes. While not a direct translation, the woman’s name (Mioumiou) combined with her association with the color white suggest she is the protagonist of Madame d’Aulnoy’s fairy tale “The White Cat” from *Contes nouveaux; ou Les fées à la mode* (1698). In the tale, d’Aulnoy relates how an enchanted cat helps a prince complete tasks for his father in competition with his two older brothers to determine who will inherit the kingdom. When the prince requires the most beautiful princess to win the competition, the white cat promises to grant him this in exchange for the prince beheading the cat. The prince reluctantly agrees, and in beheading the cat, he frees the enchanted princess from the fairy spell; the two wed in the end.

38 The great John of England.

39 John Bull is a fictitious character used to symbolize Great Britain, or England in particular; this figure is similar to Uncle Sam in the United States. John Russell (1792–1878) was a British politician who served as prime minister of the United Kingdom from 1846 to 1852. John Bright (1811–89) was also a British politician known for promoting free trade; around the time of the publication of this short story, Bright was working to negotiate a trade agreement between Great Britain and France.

40 There are many legends surrounding King Arthur in Great Britain, including several relaying how he and/or his knights lie in an enchanted sleep awaiting a call from horn or bell to awaken them to fight for Great Britain in its time of need.

41 This literally translates to “my beauty,” and its use here, along with the previous description of the husband as ugly, suggests these two married characters are Beauty and the Beast.

42 A hooded cloak.

43 Sganarelle is a character from Molière’s one-act comedy *Sganarelle, or The Imaginary Cuckold* (1660). The quotation translates as “These are small things that are from time to time necessary in friendship; and five or six strokes of the sword between people who love each other only reinvigorate affection.”

44 *Fée marraine* means “fairy godmother.”

Christina Rossetti

Christina Rossetti (1830–94) was a well-known poet born into a London literary and artistic family: her Italian father was a poet, her brother Dante Gabriel Rossetti was a well-known poet and painter, and another brother and sister were also authors. Accounts of her life suggest one of contrasting extremes: she was a "spirited and wilful" child who later became known to the public as a "restrained, self-disciplined poet" (Flowers xxxviii); indeed, even after health left her confined to her house in the 1880s, she continued to be active in the literary community through letters and publications.

Rossetti was considered a major voice in Victorian poetry, starting with the publication of her collection *Goblin Market and Other Poems* in 1862. Her work was so well regarded by her contemporaries that she was considered for the position of poet laureate of Great Britain and Ireland in 1892. Rossetti is best known today for her long poem *Goblin Market* (1862), which features a fantasy and a fairy-tale quality that encourages feminist interpretations as it details two sisters' perilous encounter with a group of predatory goblin men. Betty S. Flowers explains that early interpretations of Rossetti's works focused on "unhappy love relationships," but "with the advent of feminist literary criticism in the early 1970s," the critical focus changed as *Goblin Market* was "read as a critique of economic exchange, as a commentary on the nature of desire, and in relation to consumerism, vampirism and anorexia, among other possibilities" (xliv–xlv). Significantly, Rossetti's first two poetry collections identified her as a "potential children's poet, since goblins and princes were presumably the staple of fairy tales" (Auerbach and Knoepflmacher 365), yet these poems communicated very adult messages when viewed through a feminist lens.

The following poem, "The Prince's Progress," began as a ballad titled "The Fairy Prince Who Arrived Too Late," which was originally published in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1863; Rossetti later expanded it into a much longer poem and included it in her second collection of poetry, *"The Prince's Progress" and Other Poems* (1866). Whereas the short ballad

focuses on the result of the fairy prince's delayed arrival, "The Prince's Progress" follows the prince on his unnecessarily extended quest to retrieve his bride. Both texts highlight the narrative's connection to the classic "Sleeping Beauty." However, while Sleeping Beauty is awakened with the prince's kiss, the princess in this narrative poem falls into a coma and dies while dutifully awaiting her prince's arrival. Although "The Prince's Progress" is considered less successful than *Goblin Market*, it's important to note that the poem communicates several themes seen in Rossetti's corpus; for instance, as Flowers notes, "Rossetti's frequent theme of love threatened by death is interwoven with another central theme: the vanity of youth and beauty given the inevitability of age and death" (xxxix).

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“The Prince’s Progress” (1866)[1]

Till all sweet gums and juices flow,
Till the blossom of blossoms blow,
The long hours go and come and go,
    The bride she sleepeth, waketh, sleepeth,
Waiting for one whose coming is slow:—
        Hark! the bride weepeth.

“How long shall I wait, come heat come rime?”[2]—
“Till the strong Prince comes, who must come in time”
(Her women say), “there’s a mountain to climb,
    A river to ford. Sleep, dream and sleep:
Sleep” (they say): “we’ve muffled the chime,
        Better dream than weep.”

In his world-end palace the strong Prince sat,
Taking his ease on cushion and mat,
Close at hand lay his staff and his hat.
    “When wilt thou start? the bride waits, O youth.”—
“Now the moon’s at full; I tarried for that,
        Now I start in truth.

“But tell me first, true voice of my doom,
Of my veiled bride in her maiden bloom;
Keeps she watch through glare and through gloom,
    Watch for me asleep and awake?”—
“Spell-bound she watches in one white room,
        And is patient for thy sake.

“By her head lilies and rosebuds grow;
The lilies droop, will the rosebuds blow?
The silver slim lilies hang the head low;
    Their stream is scanty, their sunshine rare;
Let the sun blaze out, and let the stream flow,
        They will blossom and wax fair.

“Red and white poppies[3] grow at her feet,
The blood-red wait for sweet summer heat,
Wrapped in bud-coats hairy and neat;
    But the white buds swell, one day they will burst,
Will open their death-cups drowsy and sweet—
        Which will open the first?”

Then a hundred sad voices lifted a wail,
And a hundred glad voices piped on the gale:
“Time is short, life is short,” they took up the tale:
    “Life is sweet, love is sweet, use today while you may;
Love is sweet, and tomorrow may fail;
        Love is sweet, use today.”

While the song swept by, beseeching and meek,
Up rose the Prince with a flush on his cheek,
Up he rose to stir and to seek,
    Going forth in the joy of his strength;
Strong of limb if of purpose weak,
        Starting at length.

Forth he set in the breezy morn,
Crossing green fields of nodding corn,
As goodly a Prince as ever was born;

Carolling with the carolling lark;—
Sure his bride will be won and worn,
Ere fall of the dark.

So light his step, so merry his smile,
A milkmaid loitered beside a stile,
Set down her pail and rested awhile,
A wave-haired milkmaid, rosy and white;
The Prince, who had journeyed at least a mile,
Grew athirst at the sight.

“Will you give me a morning draught?”—
“You’re kindly welcome,” she said, and laughed.
He lifted the pail, new milk he quaffed;
Then wiping his curly black beard like silk:
“Whitest cow that ever was calved
Surely gave you this milk.”

Was it milk now, or was it cream?
Was she a maid, or an evil dream?
Her eyes began to glitter and gleam;
He would have gone, but he stayed instead;
Green they gleamed as he looked in them:
“Give me my fee,” she said.—

“I will give you a jewel of gold.”—
“Not so; gold is heavy and cold.”—
“I will give you a velvet fold
Of foreign work your beauty to deck.”—
“Better I like my kerchief rolled
Light and white round my neck.”—

“Nay,” cried he, “but fix your own fee.”—
She laughed, “You may give the full moon to me;
Or else sit under this apple-tree
    Here for one idle day by my side;
After that I’ll let you go free,
        And the world is wide.”

Loth to stay, but to leave her slack,
He half turned away, then he quite turned back:
For courtesy’s sake he could not lack
    To redeem his own royal pledge;
Ahead too the windy heaven lowered black
        With a fire-cloven edge.

So he stretched his length in the apple-tree shade,
Lay and laughed and talked to the maid,
Who twisted her hair in a cunning braid
    And writhed it shining in serpent-coils,
And held him a day and night fast laid
        In her subtle toils.

At the death of night and the birth of day,
When the owl left off his sober play,
And the bat hung himself out of the way,
    Woke the song of mavis and merle,
And heaven put off its hodden[4] grey
        For mother-o’-pearl.

Peeped up daisies here and there,
Here, there, and everywhere;
Rose a hopeful lark in the air,

Spreading out towards the sun his breast;
While the moon set solemn and fair
Away in the West.

"Up, up, up," called the watchman lark,
In his clear réveillée:[5] "Hearken, oh hark!
Press to the high goal, fly to the mark.
Up, O sluggard, new morn is born;
If still asleep when the night falls dark,
Thou must wait a second morn."

"Up, up, up," sad glad voices swelled:
"So the tree falls and lies as it's felled.
Be thy bands loosed, O sleeper, long held
In sweet sleep whose end is not sweet.
Be the slackness girt[6] and the softness quelled
And the slowness fleet."

Off he set. The grass grew rare,
A blight lurked in the darkening air,
The very moss grew hueless and spare,
The last daisy stood all astunt;[7]
Behind his back the soil lay bare,
But barer in front.

A land of chasm and rent, a land
Of rugged blackness on either hand:
If water trickled its track was tanned
With an edge of rust to the chink;
If one stamped on stone or on sand
It returned a clink.

A lifeless land, a loveless land,
Without lair or nest on either hand:
Only scorpions jerked in the sand,
    Black as black iron, or dusty pale;
From point to point sheer rock was manned
        By scorpions in mail.[8]

A land of neither life nor death,
Where no man buildeth or fashioneth,
Where none draws living or dying breath;
    No man cometh or goeth there,
No man doeth, seeketh, saith,
        In the stagnant air.

Some old volcanic upset must
Have rent the crust and blackened the crust;
Wrenched and ribbed it beneath its dust
    Above earth's molten centre at seethe,[9]
Heaved and heaped it by huge upthrust
        Of fire beneath.

Untrodden before, untrodden since:
Tedious land for a social Prince;
Halting, he scanned the outs and ins,
    Endless, labyrinthine, grim,
Of the solitude that made him wince,
        Laying wait for him.

By bulging rock and gaping cleft,
Even of half mere daylight reft,[10]
Rueful he peered to right and left,

Muttering in his altered mood:
"The fate is hard that weaves my weft,[11]
Though my lot be good."

Dim the changes of day to night,
Of night scarce dark to day not bright.
Still his road wound towards the right,
Still he went, and still he went,
Till one night he espied a light,
In his discontent.

Out it flashed from a yawn-mouthed cave,
Like a red-hot eye from a grave.
No man stood there of whom to crave
Rest for wayfarer plodding by:
Though the tenant were churl or knave
The Prince might try.

In he passed and tarried not,
Groping his way from spot to spot,
Towards where the cavern flare glowed hot:—
An old, old mortal, cramped and double,
Was peering into a seething-pot,
In a world of trouble.

The veriest atomy[12] he looked,
With grimy fingers clutching and crooked,
Tight skin, a nose all bony and hooked,
And a shaking, sharp, suspicious way;
His blinking eyes had scarcely brooked[13]
The light of day.

Stared the Prince, for the sight was new;
Stared, but asked without more ado:
“May a weary traveller lodge with you,
    Old father, here in your lair?
In your country the inns seem few,
        And scanty the fare.”

The head turned not to hear him speak;
The old voice whistled as through a leak
(Out it came in a quavering squeak):
    “Work for wage is a bargain fit:
If there’s aught[14] of mine that you seek
        You must work for it.

“Buried alive from light and air
This year is the hundredth year,
I feed my fire with a sleepless care,
    Watching my potion wane or wax:
Elixir of Life[15] is simmering there,
        And but one thing lacks.

“If you’re fain to lodge here with me,
Take that pair of bellows you see—
Too heavy for my old hands they be—
    Take the bellows and puff and puff:
When the steam curls rosy and free
        The broth’s boiled enough.

“Then take your choice of all I have;
I will give you life if you crave.
Already I’m mildewed for the grave,

So first myself I must drink my fill:
But all the rest may be yours, to save
Whomever you will."

"Done," quoth[16] the Prince, and the bargain stood,
First he piled on resinous wood,
Next plied the bellows in hopeful mood;
Thinking, "My love and I will live.
If I tarry, why life is good,
And she may forgive."

The pot began to bubble and boil;
The old man cast in essence and oil,
He stirred all up with a triple coil
Of gold and silver and iron wire,
Dredged in a pinch of virgin soil,
And fed the fire.

But still the steam curled watery white;
Night turned to day and day to night;
One thing lacked, by his feeble sight
Unseen, unguessed by his feeble mind:
Life might miss him, but Death the blight
Was sure to find.

So when the hundredth year was full
The thread was cut and finished the school.
Death snapped the old worn-out tool,
Snapped him short while he stood and stirred
(Though stiff he stood as a stiff-necked mule)
With never a word.

Thus at length the old crab was nipped.
The dead hand slipped, the dead finger dipped
In the broth as the dead man slipped,—
That same instant, a rosy red
Flushed the steam, and quivered and clipped
Round the dead old head.

The last ingredient was supplied
(Unless the dead man mistook or lied).
Up started the Prince, he cast aside
The bellows plied through the tedious trial,
Made sure that his host had died,
And filled a phial.

“One night’s rest,” thought the Prince: “This done,
Forth I start with the rising sun:
With the morrow I rise and run,
Come what will of wind or of weather.
This draught of Life when my Bride is won
We’ll drink together.”

Thus the dead man stayed in his grave,
Self-chosen, the dead man in his cave;
There he stayed, were he fool or knave,
Or honest seeker who had not found:
While the Prince outside was prompt to crave
Sleep on the ground.

“If she watches, go bid her sleep;
Bid her sleep, for the road is steep:
He can sleep who holdeth her cheap,

Sleep and wake and sleep again.
Let him sow, one day he shall reap,
Let him sow the grain.

“When there blows a sweet garden rose,
Let it bloom and wither if no man knows:
But if one knows when the sweet thing blows,
Knows, and lets it open and drop,
If but a nettle his garden grows
He hath earned the crop.”

Through his sleep the summons rang,
Into his ears it sobbed and it sang.
Slow he woke with a drowsy pang,
Shook himself without much debate,
Turned where he saw green branches hang,
Started though late.

For the black land was travelled o’er,
He should see the grim land no more.
A flowering country stretched before
His face when the lovely day came back:
He hugged the phial of Life he bore,
And resumed his track.

By willow courses he took his path,
Spied what a nest the kingfisher hath,
Marked the fields green to aftermath,
Marked where the red-brown field-mouse ran,
Loitered awhile for a deep-stream bath,
Yawned for a fellow-man.

Up on the hills not a soul in view,
In a vale not many nor few;
Leaves, still leaves, and nothing new.
    It’s oh for a second maiden, at least,
To bear the flagon, and taste it too,
        And flavour the feast.

Lagging he moved, and apt to swerve;
Lazy of limb, but quick of nerve.
At length the water-bed took a curve,
    The deep river swept its bankside bare;
Waters streamed from the hill-reserve—
        Waters here, waters there.

High above, and deep below,
Bursting, bubbling, swelling the flow,
Like hill torrents after the snow,—
    Bubbling, gurgling, in whirling strife,
Swaying, sweeping, to and fro,—
        He must swim for his life.

Which way?—which way?—his eyes grew dim
With the dizzying whirl—which way to swim?
The thunderous downshoot deafened him;
    Half he choked in the lashing spray:
Life is sweet, and the grave is grim—
        Which way?—which way?

A flash of light, a shout from the strand:
“This way—this way; here lies the land!”
His phial clutched in one drowning hand;

He catches—misses—catches a rope;
His feet slip on the slipping sand:
Is there life?—is there hope?

Just saved, without pulse or breath,—
Scarcely saved from the gulp of death;
Laid where a willow shadoweth—
Laid where a swelling turf is smooth.
(O Bride! but the Bridegroom lingereth
For all thy sweet youth.)

Kind hands do and undo,
Kind voices whisper and coo:
“I will chafe his hands”—“And I”—“And you
Raise his head, put his hair aside.”
(If many laugh, one well may rue:
Sleep on, thou Bride.)

So the Prince was tended with care:
One wrung foul ooze from his clustered hair;
Two chafed his hands, and did not spare;
But one held his drooping head breast-high,
Till his eyes oped,[17] and at unaware
They met eye to eye.

Oh, a moon face in a shadowy place,
And a light touch and a winsome grace,
And a thrilling tender voice that says:
“Safe from waters that seek the sea—
Cold waters by rugged ways—
Safe with me.”

While overhead bird whistles to bird,
And round about plays a gamesome[18] herd:
“Safe with us”—some take up the word—
    “Safe with us, dear lord and friend:
All the sweeter if long deferred
        Is rest in the end.”

Had he stayed to weigh and to scan,
He had been more or less than a man:
He did what a young man can,
    Spoke of toil and an arduous way—
Toil tomorrow, while golden ran
        The sands of today.

Slip past, slip fast,
Uncounted hours from first to last,
Many hours till the last is past,
    Many hours dwindling to one—
One hour whose die is cast,
        One last hour gone.

Come, gone—gone forever—
Gone as an unreturning river—
Gone as to death the merriest liver—
    Gone as the year at the dying fall—
Tomorrow, today, yesterday, never—
        Gone once for all.

Came at length the starting-day,
With last words, and last words to say,
With bodiless cries from far away—

Chiding wailing voices that rang
Like a trumpet-call to the tug and fray;
And thus they sang:

“Is there life?—the lamp burns low;
Is there hope?—the coming is slow:
The promise promised so long ago,
The long promise, has not been kept.
Does she live?—does she die?—she slumbers so
Who so oft has wept.

“Does she live?—does she die?—she languisheth
As a lily drooping to death,
As a drought-worn bird with failing breath,
As a lovely vine without a stay,
As a tree whereof the owner saith,
‘Hew it down today.’”

Stung by that word the Prince was fain[19]
To start on his tedious road again.
He crossed the stream where a ford was plain,
He clomb[20] the opposite bank though steep,
And swore to himself to strain and attain
Ere he tasted sleep.

Huge before him a mountain frowned
With foot of rock on the valley ground,
And head with snows incessant crowned,
And a cloud mantle about its strength,
And a path which the wild goat hath not found
In its breadth and length.

But he was strong to do and dare:
If a host had withstood him there,
He had braved a host with little care
    In his lusty youth and his pride,
Tough to grapple though weak to snare.
        He comes, O Bride.

Up he went where the goat scarce clings,
Up where the eagle folds her wings,
Past the green line of living things,
    Where the sun cannot warm the cold,—
Up he went as a flame enrings
        Where there seems no hold.

Up a fissure barren and black,
Till the eagles tired upon his track,
And the clouds were left behind his back,
    Up till the utmost peak was past,
Then he gasped for breath and his strength fell slack;
        He paused at last.

Before his face a valley spread
Where fatness laughed, wine, oil, and bread,
Where all fruit-trees their sweetness shed,
    Where all birds made love to their kind,
Where jewels twinkled, and gold lay red
        And not hard to find.

Midway down the mountain side
(On its green slope the path was wide)
Stood a house for a royal bride,

Built all of changing opal stone,
The royal palace, till now descried[21]
In his dreams alone.

Less bold than in days of yore,
Doubting now though never before,
Doubting he goes and lags the more:
Is the time late? does the day grow dim?
Rose, will she open the crimson core
Of her heart to him?

Take heart of grace! the potion of Life
May go far to woo him a wife:
If she frown, yet a lover’s strife
Lightly raised can be laid again:
A hasty word is never the knife
To cut love in twain.

Far away stretched the royal land,
Fed by dew, by a spice-wind fanned:
Light labour more, and his foot would stand
On the threshold, all labour done;
Easy pleasure laid at his hand,
And the dear Bride won.

His slackening steps pause at the gate—
Does she wake or sleep?—the time is late—
Does she sleep now, or watch and wait?
She has watched, she has waited long,
Watching athwart[22] the golden grate
With a patient song.

Fling the golden portals wide,
The Bridegroom comes to his promised Bride;
Draw the gold-stiff curtains aside,
    Let them look on each other’s face,
She in her meekness, he in his pride—
        Day wears apace.[23]

Day is over, the day that wore.
What is this that comes through the door,
The face covered, the feet before?
    This that coming takes his breath;
The Bride not seen, to be seen no more
        Save of Bridegroom Death?

Veiled figures carrying her
Sweep by yet make no stir;
There is a smell of spice and myrrh,
    A bride-chant burdened with one name;
The bride-song rises steadier
        Than the torches’ flame:

“Too late for love, too late for joy,[24]
    Too late, too late!
You loitered on the road too long,
    You trifled at the gate:
The enchanted dove upon her branch
    Died without a mate;
The enchanted princess in her tower
    Slept, died, behind the grate;
Her heart was starving all this while
        You made it wait.

“Ten years ago, five years ago,
One year ago,
Even then you had arrived in time,
Though somewhat slow;
Then you had known her living face
Which now you cannot know:
The frozen fountain would have leaped,
The buds gone on to blow,
The warm south wind would have awaked
To melt the snow.

“Is she fair now as she lies?
Once she was fair;
Meet[25] queen for any kingly king,
With gold-dust on her hair.
Now these are poppies in her locks,
White poppies she must wear;
Must wear a veil to shroud her face
And the want graven[26] there:
Or is the hunger fed at length,
Cast off the care?

“We never saw her with a smile
Or with a frown;
Her bed seemed never soft to her,
Though tossed of down;
She little heeded what she wore,
Kirtle,[27] or wreath, or gown;
We think her white brows often ached
Beneath her crown,
Till silvery hairs showed in her locks

That used to be so brown.

"We never heard her speak in haste:
Her tones were sweet,
And modulated just so much
As it was meet:
Her heart sat silent through the noise
And concourse of the street.
There was no hurry in her hands,
No hurry in her feet;
There was no bliss drew nigh to her,
That she might run to greet.

"You should have wept her yesterday,
Wasting upon her bed:
But wherefore should you weep today
That she is dead?
Lo, we who love weep not today,
But crown her royal head.
Let be these poppies that we strew,
Your roses are too red:
Let be these poppies, not for you
Cut down and spread."

1 From Christina Rossetti, "The Prince's Progress," in *"The Prince's Progress" and Other Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1866), 1–30.

2 Frost.

3 White poppies are a common symbol for consolation, sleep, dreams, and peace, while red poppies are associated with pleasure, sacrifice, and remembrance. All these meanings apply to the woman described in the poem, who is a sleeping beauty waiting to be "awakened" (literally and sexually) by her prince and husband-to-be. Poppies are also sometimes associated with death.

4 Coarse woolen cloth.

5 A signal indicating that it is time to wake or get up.

6 Secured or bound, like tightening a belt.

7 Prevented or restricted from growing.

8 *Mail* here refers to armor made of metal rings or sheets joined together but still able to move flexibly.

9 At a boil.

10 Stolen or robbed by force.

11 *Weft* is a weaving term used to refer to the horizontal threads on a loom over and under which the warp (vertical threads) are passed to make woven cloth. The prince here references the idea of the fates, a group of goddesses, who were often depicted as weavers.

12 *Veriest* is the superlative of "very"; it is used to emphasize the degree to which a description applies to someone or something. *Atomy* is an archaic word meaning skeleton or emaciated body. Together, this phrase indicates the man was very emaciated or skeletal.

13 Tolerated.

14 Anything at all.

15 The elixir of life, also known as the elixir of mortality or the philosopher's stone, is a potion that grants eternal life or eternal youth and/or cures all diseases. It was sought after by alchemists of various cultures and time periods.

16 Said.

17 Archaic form of *opened*.

18 Playful and merry.

19 *Fain* means "pleased" or "willing under the circumstances," although it can also have a more negative connotation of feeling compelled or obliged by the circumstances.

20 Archaic form of *climbed*.

21 Seen.

22 Across.

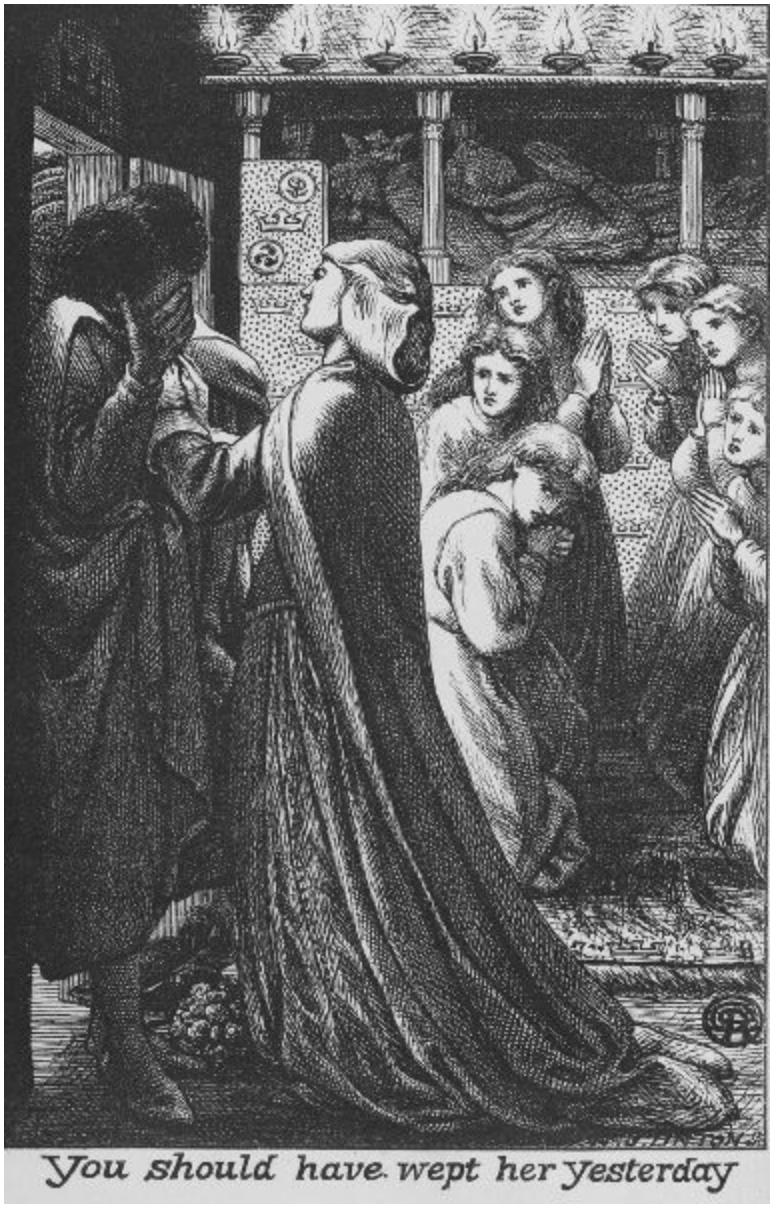
23 Quickly.

24 This is the first line of the shorter dirge that Rossetti first published as "The Fairy Prince Who Arrived Too Late," which consisted of these final six stanzas of the longer poem.

25 Proper or suitable.

26 Engraved or fixed.

27 The outer petticoat worn by a woman.



Frontispiece illustration by Dante Grabriel Rossetti. From Christina Rossetti, *"The Prince's Progress" and Other Poems* (London: Macmillan, 1866).

Mary de Morgan

Mary de Morgan (1850–1907) was the youngest child of Augustus de Morgan and sister to the artist and novelist William de Morgan. She would publish three collections of original fairy tales: *On a Pincushion* (1877), *The Necklace of Princess Fiorimonde* (1880), and *The Windfairies* (1900). De Morgan's mother, Sophia Elizabeth, was most likely a great influence on her feminist leanings. In 1866, Sophia de Morgan was one of 1,499 women to sign the women's suffrage petition, and in 1870 she authored the essay "Our Better Selves," which argued for better education and increased political and professional rights for women (Crawford 717, 756). In 1890, Mary de Morgan followed in her mother's footsteps when she joined the Women's Franchise League, whose stated objectives were "[t]o extend to women, whether married, unmarried, or widowed the right to vote at parliamentary, municipal and local and other elections on the same conditions which qualify men [and] [t]o establish for all women equal civil and political rights with men" (qtd. in Crawford 716). She shared her fairy tales with her family and the children of family friends, and it is in her fairy tales that readers can discern her feminist leanings.

The fairy-tale genre offered Mary de Morgan the unique opportunity to speak her mind without social condemnation. As Roger Lancelyn Green indicates, she was not one to hold her tongue even among the many artists who visited the de Morgan family, going so far as to insult a young Bernard Shaw, "who heard some home-truths from Mary, and in consequence 'hated her exceedingly'" (10). De Morgan and other Victorian women writers found freedom of expression in juvenile literature, including the fairy tale. Although considered an appropriate genre for women writers because of its association with children, the audience of de Morgan's fairy tales was not limited to children. Indeed, Green notes that de Morgan told her fairy tales to entertain adult friends "even though there were no children" present (10).

While Mary de Morgan's fairy-tale collections do include some stories that adhere to the traditional marriage plot, the incongruous details she includes in her stories are more likely to have the reader questioning social

norms, in particular those surrounding femininity, love, and marriage. During the 1870s, much of the debate on the condition of women in Great Britain centered on the institution of marriage. Writers wrote numerous articles debating whether marriage was the appropriate destiny for all women. Several of de Morgan's fairy tales participate in this debate, questioning the ideal of marital happiness by showcasing how such expectations cause women to become vain, jealous social-climbers who try to use their beauty to manipulate men or, conversely, result in women at times literally being beaten into submitting to an unwanted marriage.

Although "The Seeds of Love" (1877) focuses on the competition of two female cousins, de Morgan does not adhere to the good woman / bad woman binary featured in conventional fairy tales and popular discourse on marriage during the 1870s. Instead, de Morgan creates female characters who blur these stereotypes, possessing both traditionally "feminine" and "unfeminine" characteristics. Moreover, de Morgan (who never married) dismisses the argument that marriage is the sole destiny of women by rejecting the traditional fairy-tale marriage-plot ending, highlighting the falsity of idealized patriarchal love, and sending the surviving woman into the world unwed. At the same time, the heroine's misery and suicide at the end of the story suggest that the ideal of marital happiness is a delusion. In this way, de Morgan suggests the need for women to look beyond the illusion of marital bliss and view the institution of marriage, and their conception of love, critically.

“The Seeds of Love” (1877)

“On a Pincushion”[1]

On a pincushion were a pebble Brooch, a jet Shawl-pin, and a common Pin. They were all complaining because they were so often left behind instead of being taken out like the other brooches and pins.

“It is all very well for you,” said the Shawl-pin, “but for me it is trying, because I have seen better days and remember the time when I was never used to pin up anything but the finest Indian and cashmere shawls.”

“Nay,” cried the Brooch, “you cannot expect to be used as much as I, for you are all black and would not be taken for anything but a dark shawl. But I am all sorts of colours and therefore might be used any day. I would sooner have been left uncut, unpolished, than brought to this.”

“I don’t think,” said the Pin, “that either of you have as much cause to complain as I, for you are neither of you as useful, and might not be wanted, but I am always needed, and so many pins are taken every day that it seems hard I should be left here for nearly a week and all because I am run so far into the pincushion that nothing but my head can be seen.”

After a pause the Shawl-pin said, “I wish those Bracelets up there would leave off chattering. There’s nothing disturbs my nerves so much as the clatter of talking.”

“Bracelets are always great talkers,” said the Brooch. “I once passed two months in a jewel box with a number, and I was truly thankful when I was taken out. Their talking was incessant, and it was impossible to get a wink of sleep.” And all three scowled up at the Bracelets, who were hanging over the looking glass, but who did not mind them in the least, but went on talking just the same. “Let us do something to drown their noise,” said the Pin. “Let us tell stories.”

“I will tell you one,” said the Brooch, “and I know it to be true, for it was before I was cut and polished, and I was at the place myself where it happened,” and having cleared its throat, the Brooch began as follows. . . .[2]

“The Seeds of Love”[3]

Many years ago, in a country far over the sea, was a little village standing by a great river, and over the river was a bridge, with gates which were opened and shut when carriages and horses went through. A little white cottage stood close beside the bridge, and in it lived an old woman and her two granddaughters, whose business it was to open and shut the heavy iron gates. The woman was very old, and her two granddaughters were the children of her two sons, who were both dead; so the young girls were cousins. They were just the same age, but not the least alike. They were named Zaire and Blanchelys. Blanchelys had gold-coloured hair and eyes like blue cornflowers, and she laughed and sang from morning till night. Zaire’s hair was black as a raven’s wing, and her eyes were like large sloes.[4] She was called the prettiest girl in all the village, but no one loved her as they did the blue-eyed Blanchelys.

The old grandmother did nothing but sit by the fire and knit, so one or other of the girls was always out attending to the gates and receiving the tolls of the passersby. Zaire grumbled at the work, but Blanchelys did it cheerfully and always said a pleasant word to each of the villagers as they came over the bridge.

One winter the old grandmother was feebler than ever, and on Christmas Eve she called the two girls to her bedside and said,

“My dear children, I feel that my end is now fast approaching, but before I die I have something to say to you both. I trust you will always be good girls, and then you are sure to be happy. I have little to leave you except my blessing, but there is something more I have for each of you. That is these two little candles; they are magic candles, and when you set them alight there will appear to you a fairy who will grant you the wish of your heart. If it is a good wish it will be a good fairy that appears, but if it is a wicked wish it will be a wicked fairy that comes; so I advise you to beware, for bad fairies help none. You must burn your candles alone on a night when there is neither moon nor star, and you can only have one wish, for when that is granted the candle will burn out, but if you will take my advice you will never light them at all. Many, many years ago they were brought over the sea, from a strange land where animals spoke and men and women flew, by a sailor who gave them to my grandmother, who gave them to my mother,

who gave them to me. So I have had them all my life, but no one has ever used them, for we all thought that if people live honestly and do their duty, they are sure to be happy without the help of any fairy folk."

So saying, the good woman drew from under her pillow two tiny candles and gave one to each of the two girls, who stood by her bedside. They took them in great surprise, and Blanchelys stooped down and kissed her, and as she did so, the old woman died.

Blanchelys grieved and wept much, for she had loved her well, but Zaire was so busy thinking of her magic candle that she did not grieve for her grandmother's death, but sat brooding over what great thing she should wish for when she lit it.

"I will keep it till I know of something I long for very much indeed," she said to herself. So she put the candle safely away, and Blanchelys put hers away also, meaning to take her grandmother's advice and never to light it. So the two girls lived in the same little cottage, going out as before to open the gates for the passersby.

On the other side of the river was a grand castle which belonged to the king. Long ago he used to stay there to hunt, but now he was grown too old, and the castle was never used. One day the girls heard that the king's son was coming, and all the village was to be decorated in his honour. The first day he rode through it on his way to the hunt, Zaire and Blanchelys knew that he would cross the bridge; so they both dressed themselves in their very best to come out and open the gates, but Zaire said to Blanchelys, "You stand back, and let me go first, for, as people say I am the prettiest girl in the village, it is right I should be seen." So Blanchelys stood behind and looked over her cousin's shoulder.

She saw the party of riders coming across the bridge, and they were all splendidly dressed in coloured velvets and gold and in the middle, riding on a snow-white horse, was the king's son, clad in a suit of burnished gold, that sparked and shone in the sunlight. His hair, which was darker and redder than his golden dress, hung over his shoulders and stood out around his head like fine wires. On his head was a velvet cap, from which hung a long white feather fastened down by a diamond clasp, and as he smiled and talked to those around him, Blanchelys thought she never had seen anyone so beautiful in her life. In front of the party rode trumpeters, blowing on

their trumpets, to clear the way, and behind were servants and pages leading hounds and bearing hawks.

But none of the party noticed the two girls who stood at the cottage door, and the horses' feet raised a cloud of dust, which flew into Zaire's face, and she fell into a passion. "If that is all one gets, forsooth, for opening the gate for the king's son," she cried, "I will never do it again." But Blanchelys stood at the door and watched the party of horsemen till they were quite out of sight, and then she sighed. "I would stand at the gate all day if he would only ride by once," she said, and her cousin laughed at her scornfully. But when the royal party rode back, Blanchelys opened the gate, and stood and gazed at the king's son as before, and when she returned into the cottage she wept silently, and when she slept at night she dreamed of the king's son. Every day he came across the bridge on his snow-white horse as he rode to the hunt, and every day Blanchelys came out and opened the gate and gazed on his face, but he never noticed her, and she sighed as she turned again to the cottage. So the days passed, and Blanchelys grew thin and pale. Zaire laughed at her and asked what ailed her. "If you lose all your good looks like that," she said, "you will never get a husband."

"I want no husband whom I shall ever wed," said Blanchelys sadly, and at that, Zaire laughed the more.

One night when Zaire was sleeping soundly, Blanchelys, who had lain awake all night, rose out of her little bed and, stepping softly to the window, looked out at the night. There were neither moon nor stars, and the night was very dark.

"I must be quick," said Blanchelys, "for soon the sun will rise."

So she dressed herself quickly, but she left her hair hanging down her back,[5] and trod noiselessly to the cupboard and softly opened the door. She took out the candle and hid it in her bosom. Then she crept from the room, down the passage, and into the little garden. In the middle of the garden stood a great yew tree, whose branches almost touched the ground. It looked like a great black giant in the night, and Blanchelys trembled as she looked at it; but she summoned her courage and, going up to the tree, crept under its branches and knelt down, leaning against the trunk. It was black, black night, but not a breeze was blowing, and it was as hot as if the sun was shining. Blanchelys stuck her candle firmly in the ground and then lit it. Directly it began to burn; there came a little rustling sound through the

trees like the flapping of doves' wings, and then in front of where Blanchelys knelt, in the light of the candle, she saw a boy, who was not like anyone she had ever seen before, so beautiful was he. He had curly golden hair, which spread round his head like a halo, and he wore on his hair a wreath of pink roses, and he carried a branch of roses in his hand. His robe was white, but it did not hide his bare feet, on which were golden sandals, and a golden girdle was round his waist. From his shoulders grew soft pink wings, and his face was as beautiful as an angel's.

"I am Love. What do you want with me?" said the boy, and at the sound of his voice all the wood doves in the neighbouring trees awoke and began to coo. But Blanchelys trembled and looked at him in silence, and he spoke again,

"Speak quickly—tell me what is your heart's wish, for soon your candle will have burnt out, and then I shall vanish." Then Blanchelys summoned all her courage, and clasping her hands, said in a low, trembling voice,

"Give me the love of the king's son."

Love looked at her for a moment, and he smiled and laughed low to himself; then he gently shook the branch of roses he carried, and into his hand from the heart of the roses fell some tiny seeds.

"Take them," he said, holding them out to Blanchelys, "and plant them in the earth just as the sun is rising; but ere you cover them up breathe over them the name of him whose love you desire. From them will spring a rose tree, and as it grows, so his love for you will grow. While that tree lives he will love you more than all the world, but should it pine and die, his love for you would wane and die also, and then only one thing in the world would make it live again. And beware of one thing, that is the prick of the thorns which grow upon the tree; for should one pierce your skin, and draw the blood, be it ever so little, the wound will never heal, even if it does not kill you. Farewell, and see that you guard well your tree."

Illustration by William de Morgan. From Mary de Morgan's "The Seeds of Love" in *"On a Pincushion" and Other Fairy Tales*, 2nd ed. (London: Seeley, Jackson & Halliday, 1877), 34.

"Stay for one moment," entreated Blanchelys. "Tell me how and where I should seek you if I want to find you."

"I am to be found in many places," answered Love. "But I am often where you would never seek me and seldom where you would look for me. Farewell!" And again there was a soft whirring of wings, and in a moment Love had disappeared, and the light from the candle died in the dark night. The wood doves stopped cooing, and all was still again. Then she rose from her knees and turned into the house. She could not see the seeds in the

darkness, but she grasped them firmly in one hand as she crept again into her little bed. Zaire moved in her sleep, but she did not wake.

As the first rays of the sun began to shine, Blanchelys arose again and examined her seeds. They were more like jewels than seeds, for they were bright clear red, like rubies, and each one was in the form of a heart. Blanchelys kissed them, and then she sought about for a spot in which to sow them. At last she took a flowerpot and filled it with earth, and in it laid the seeds, and breathed over them the name of the king's son, and covered them over with earth. Then she put the flowerpot in the window of her room. "Now I can watch it both night and day," she said, "and see that no harm comes to it."

That morning, when the king's son rode past to the hunt, he stopped at the cottage door and asked Blanchelys to give him a glass of water. It was the first time he had ever spoken to her, and her heart beat high with joy. At night, when she went to look at her flowerpot, she found that a tiny shoot was appearing above the earth in the pot.

Next day as the prince rode past he stopped again at the cottage, and every day he stopped and spoke with Blanchelys, and every day stayed with her a longer time; and the plant in the pot grew larger and larger, till at last Blanchelys saw that it was a rose tree and that it was covered in tiny buds.

One evening, when the prince came back from hunting, he came into the cottage with Blanchelys, and asked her if she would be his wife, and told her that when he was King she should be Queen.

Blanchelys wept for joy, and when she went to look at her flower, she found that one of the buds had burst into a splendid white rose, which scented the whole room.

So Blanchelys married the king's son, and there were great rejoicings at the wedding all over the country, and illuminations everywhere; and Blanchelys had fine ladies to wait on her, and beautiful jewels given to her, and fine dresses made for her, but what she valued more than all was her pot with the rose tree in it, which grew more beautiful every day, for fresh roses bloomed.

But Zaire was bitterly jealous of Blanchelys, because she was going to be Queen, though Blanchelys was very kind to her and gave her beautiful things, and took her to live with her at the palace. Still, Zaire hated her, and thought night and day of how she could do her any harm, and as she saw

how happy Blanchelys was, and how much her husband loved her, she hated her all the more. So the time passed on. Blanchelys' rose had grown into a big tree, and she had planted it in the palace garden, just beneath her bedroom window, so that it might be the first thing she saw when she woke in the morning. All her ladies knew that Princess Blanchelys' favourite spot in the palace garden was close to the beautiful rose tree, where she would sit for hours gazing up at its flowers and smelling them. She never allowed anyone to gather them, and she always watered it herself. Her first care in the morning was to examine her rose tree, whilst she brushed from it all insects and cut off the dead leaves. And sometimes, when no one was there to see, she would press her lips to the roses; but Zaire watched her secretly and longed to know why Blanchelys loved the tree so much.

After a time, Blanchelys had a little son, who was heir to the crown, and she was even happier than before, and her husband loved her better. The bells were rung at the birth of the prince, and all the people rejoiced. And the rose tree grew so fast that when Blanchelys came out into the garden, with her baby in her arms, it was quite a big tree, and she was able to stand under the shade of its branches.

"You are a very happy woman, cousin Blanchelys," said Zaire, coming up to her from behind, as she stood under the tree.

"Yes, indeed, I am happy," said Blanchelys, looking at the baby in her arms. "And I hope, dear cousin Zaire, that you will be as happy as I am."

"That is impossible," said Zaire, "for one day you will be Queen, and I never shall."

"I am not so happy because I am going to be Queen," said Blanchelys, "but because I love my husband and baby so dearly."

"And, next to them, what do you love best?" asked Zaire.

"Next to them, I love my rose tree," said Blanchelys, and she laughed and wound her arms round the tree trunk.

"Then if that tree were to die, would you be very unhappy, cousin Blanchelys?" asked Zaire, and her eyes glittered eagerly.

"Yes, if my tree were to die, I think it would break my heart," said Blanchelys, and she turned quite pale at the thought.

But from that day Zaire thought of nothing but how she could kill the rose tree that her cousin loved so much. First she pulled off its leaves and

cut its branches, but fresh leaves grew in the old ones' places, and the maimed branches budded and sprouted anew. Then she took a sharp knife, and pierced it through the trunk and peeled off the bark, so that it bled. But the gash soon healed up, and the bark grew again, so that the tree was finer than before. Zaire might do what she could, but the tree grew and grew, and she could not hurt it.

Soon after the baby prince was born the old king fell ill and died, so Blanchelys and her husband were to be crowned King and Queen. Again the country was illuminated for the coronation, and Blanchelys and her husband sat on two golden thrones while the crowns were placed on their heads, and the baby lay in the golden cradle at their feet.

Queen Blanchelys was dressed in white satin and gold, with some of her dear roses in her dress, and she smiled and wept for joy, and all the crowd cheered and shouted. But when Zaire saw Blanchelys seated on her golden throne, her hatred and envy knew no bounds, and she wept with rage, for she saw that Blanchelys was better and fairer than she, though she too wore a grand satin dress, and had jewels in her hair.

At night a great ball was given in the palace, but Zaire would not dance, and stood in a corner watching Blanchelys, her lips trembling with rage. At last she started up with a thought in her mind, and ran into the palace garden, in the dark night. In one hand she held tightly grasped the little wax candle her grandmother had given her long before. The night was dark and cold, there were neither moon nor stars, and a shrill wind whistled, and Zaire shivered and trembled in her yellow satin dress. The rain began to fall, but she lifted her skirts and picked her way among the puddles in her thin shining shoes till she came to where stood Blanchelys' rose tree.

Here she stopped and, taking the candle, planted it firmly in the ground and lit it. The wind blew and the rain fell, but the candle burnt on steadily. All at once there was the sound of a hiss like a serpent's hiss, and in front of Zaire was the ugly figure of a grizzly hag clothed in black. Round her head she wore a crown of twisted living snakes, who moved their heads and spit venom on all sides. In her hand, which was more like a claw than a hand, she carried a staff, round which twined a snake who had seven heads: the first a serpent's, the second a monkey's, the third a toad's, the fourth a vulture's, the fifth a tiger's, and the sixth and seventh a man's and a woman's; and all the heads hissed and chattered and spit and shrieked with

anger. About her feet crawled frogs and toads and loathsome reptiles of all sorts, but most hideous of all was her face, for it was so seamed and wrinkled with rage and anger that it looked more like a fiend's than a woman's.

"What do you want with me?" she hissed in a voice that made Zaire tremble. "Speak—what is your wish?"

Then Zaire pointed to the rose tree, and said, "Tell me how to kill that tree."

The hag chuckled and drew from her bosom a small viper, which she held out to Zaire, who trembled still more, but took it in her hand and held it, though it was as cold as stone and very slimy.

"Take that," croaked the witch, "and dig to the roots of the rose tree. Lay it among them and it will twist around them, and as it tightens its hold, so shall the tree die."

"Who are you, and what is your name?" gasped Zaire.

"I am Envy," answered the hag, and then again Zaire heard a long low hiss, and the old woman had disappeared and left her alone still holding the cold slimy viper. At once she returned to the palace and took it to a light when no one was watching her. It was bright green and glittered as it moved. Its eyes were flaming scarlet, and from its mouth came a long forked tongue, and it hissed spitefully, but it did not attempt to hurt Zaire, and she kissed and caressed it, then hiding it in her bosom went back to dance at the ball.

Next morning, as was her wont, Queen Blanchelys came down with the baby in her arms to her rose tree, and Zaire stepped out from behind the tree and watched her as before.

"Ah, my sweet tree, each day you are more beautiful, and I am happier," said Queen Blanchelys, and she put her white arms round the tree trunk and laid her cheek against it and caressed it as before.

"Your pet seems well, cousin Blanchelys," said Zaire, coming to where she stood.

"What! Are you there, cousin Zaire?" said Blanchelys, drawing back from the tree.

"And see, I have also a new pet," said Zaire, and she drew from her bosom the cold long snake and let it twist about her arms and throat.

“What hideous creature have you there, cousin Zaire?” cried Blanchelys, trembling and hiding her eyes from the snake.

“You have a pet, why should I not have one also?” said Zaire as she kissed the snake’s glittering green head.

“But you will surely not make a pet of that dreadful snake?” said Blanchelys. “Dear cousin Zaire, throw it away, and I will give you a beautiful pet—a dove, or a gazelle, or a rose tree like mine.”

“I would not change my snake for anything in all the wide world,” said Zaire, and her eyes glittered almost like the snake’s own as she turned away still fondling it, but Queen Blanchelys shuddered and felt very sad, though she knew not why.

Zaire waited till night, and then she took a spade and went into the garden to dig at the roots of the rose tree. It was quite dark, and no one could see her. She dug and dug till she came to the long deep roots that went far into the earth, and then she stood on the ground beside the hole and took the snake from her bosom and kissed it.

“Pretty snake,” she said softly, “tighten about the roots of the tree, and kill it as quickly as you can, that it may die and cousin Blanchelys may mourn.”

Then she took the snake in her little white hand and placed it among the tree’s roots. For a moment it lay quite still, then it began to coil itself slowly about them and to twist itself round and round them.

Zaire laughed as she watched it. “Good-bye, sweet snake,” she said; “do your work well.” Then she filled up the hole with earth and smoothed the top so that no one should see.

Next day when Queen Blanchelys came to look at her tree she found it drooping, so she called to the gardeners to give it water, but not all the water in the world could refresh it, and each day it drooped more and more, and the flowers began to die and fall away. Poor Queen Blanchelys watched it with tears in her eyes. She sent for gardeners from far and near, but they could do nothing for it, and the queen was sick at heart, and grew pale and thin, for she knew that her husband was beginning to love her less and less.

Every day he rode out hunting with Zaire, and at all the court balls he danced with no one else. Queen Blanchelys mourned in silence till the last leaf fell from her tree.

“Now I will stay here no longer,” she said, “since my tree is dead and my husband no longer loves me. I will go and find Love, and ask him to help me.” So she rose in the night, and wrapped herself in a large cloak, and said good-bye to her baby, and started alone.

She wandered and wandered and wandered till she came to the village where she was born and to the little house by the bridge where she had lived.

She went into the garden where the yew tree stood and where she had seen Love before, but no Love was there now, and when she asked the neighbours if he had passed that way, they stared at her and thought her mad. So she went on and on, night and day, till her feet were sore and her face burnt with the sun. She was so weary that she could scarcely walk, but still she pressed on, looking everywhere for Love but seeing him nowhere. At last she came to a church in which a grand wedding was taking place. “Here shall I surely find him,” she said, and she quickened her steps, and went into the church and sat down among the people. She waited till the wedding was over and then watched the bridal procession coming out to see if Love was amongst them. The bride was grandly dressed, and there were many smart carriages and finely dressed people, but nowhere amongst them did she see the figure of Love, and she turned from the church with a heavy heart. As she went along the road, she came to a large tree under which sat a couple of lovers courting. “Ah, here will Love surely be,” she said, and she drew near the tree and stood silently watching the young people as they whispered and laughed together; but Love was not there, and Queen Blanchelys sought him in vain. Then she went on again till she came to a green, on which were playing a number of children.

“Now among these little ones shall I find him,” she said, and she waited and looked on at their games, but still she saw no trace of Love. So she went on and on and on, till she was so weary that she could toil no farther, and stopped on a desolate barren plain on which stood a few miserable cottages, and near them an old church and churchyard. Close by, the sea roared loud, and wild seabirds flew all about. Queen Blanchelys dropped exhausted on a little mound in front of a cottage door and overheard two women who were talking together as they sat spinning.

“He made her work for him day and night,” said one, “and never gave her a kind word.”

“He beat and kicked her,” said the other; “it’s very well for her that he is dead.”

“They are beginning to toll the bell for the funeral now,” said the first, “but there’ll be very few mourners there, I expect. He was the wickedest man for miles round.”

Then Queen Blanchelys looked across to the church, and heard the bell tolling, and saw a small dark procession winding towards the churchyard.

She raised herself from the ground and turned towards the churchyard.

“Poor woman! She is unhappy; so am I,” she said with tears in her eyes.

The priest was already reading the service beside the grave when she reached it. Only one woman stood beside it, but when she looked at her, Queen Blanchelys’ heart beat high, for close by her was Love dressed as a mourner. She waited till the service was over, and the woman and the priest had turned away, and then she sprang forward and caught Love by the cloak and sank at his feet.

“Help me, sweet Love!” she cried, and then began to weep.

“Poor Queen Blanchelys!” said Love. “Your rose tree is dead, then.” His face looked sad, and his cheeks were pale and thin.

“My tree is dead,” sobbed Queen Blanchelys, “and the king loves me no more. Ah, tell me who has killed my tree?”

“Your cousin Zaire has killed it,” said Love. “She asked Envy to help her, and Envy has given her a viper, which she laid at the tree’s roots, and it has spat its deadly venom onto the red heart, which is in the centre of the trunk, and killed it.”

“Tell me, then, how to make it live again,” gasped the queen.

“There is only one thing in the world that can do that!” said Love.

“And what is that?” asked the queen.

“The blood from your own heart,” said Love. “You must pierce your heart with a thorn from the tree, and let it flow to the tree’s roots. Then, when it touches the snake, it will shrivel and die, and the tree will bloom out afresh.”

When Queen Blanchelys heard this she turned very pale, but she rose and left the churchyard, and turned homeward. She walked for many days, for it was far to the palace, and as she drew near to it, she saw that it was all

decorated with flags as if for some great rejoicing. So she stopped and asked a countrywoman what it was for.

“You must indeed be a stranger, that you do not know that,” answered the good woman. “Tomorrow the king marries the princess Zaire, the late queen’s cousin. Queen Blanchelys has now been dead many years, so tomorrow the marriage will take place, and all the decorations are in honour of the wedding.”

Then Queen Blanchelys asked the woman if the late queen had not left a little son, and where it now was.

“It is always with the king, and he is so fond of it, that people say Princess Zaire is jealous of it and would send it away if she dared,” said the woman.

Queen Blanchelys thanked her and then sat down by the roadside and waited till night came and everyone was asleep in bed. Then she rose and stole quietly into the palace, when no one heard her, and first she took a piece of paper, and on it she wrote how she had gone away because the king did not love her and how Love had told her that Zaire had killed her rose tree from jealousy, and had stolen the king’s love, and she prayed that the king would be good to her little son when she was dead, and that she might be buried under her rose tree. Then she went upstairs, and first she went to the bedside of her cousin Zaire. “Ah, cruel cousin Zaire,” she said, “I have never hurt you. Why did you hate me so? But you shall never be Queen, in my place, though you are dreaming of it now.”

Then she went to the bedside of her little son, and she kissed him and fondled him, but she did not wake him.

“Ah, little son,” she said, “if I had not come home tonight, tomorrow you would have had a cruel stepmother in my place, but now you will never have any stepmother, and your father will always love you well.”

Then, last of all, she went to the bedside of her husband, the king, and laid her letter on the pillow, close by his head.

“Alas! Dear husband,” she said, “tonight I am looking at you, and you do not see me, but tomorrow morning you will be looking at me when I shall not see you.”

Then she kissed him softly thrice, and bid him adieu, and went out of the palace to her dear rose tree in the garden. It was nothing now but a bare

black stump. So Queen Blanchelys lay down on the ground and put her arms round the trunk, and from the dead branch she tore a long, smooth thorn and pierced her heart with it, and the drops of blood trickled to the roots of the tree, and at once the serpent at the roots shrivelled and died, and the tree again began to bud and sprout.

When the king woke in the morning the first thing he saw was the queen's letter, and he took it and read it at once, and as he read his cheeks turned pale, and he sighed bitterly, and then he called his courtiers and told them what had happened, and they all went out into the garden to the rose tree, under which lay poor Queen Blanchelys dead. But the tree which before was only a piece of dead wood was covered with green leaves and rosebuds.

The king kissed the queen's pale face, and ordered that there should be a grand funeral and that she should be buried under her rose tree, and from that day forth the king thought of no one but Queen Blanchelys, and each day sat by her grave under her rose tree; but Zaire was stripped of all her fine dresses and jewels, and had the clothes which she wore before she came to the palace, and was banished from the land and had to beg her bread from door to door.

But when the rose tree burst into bloom, the roses, which were white before, were as red as the blood which sprang from the queen's heart, and which had coloured them.

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"Now I call that an uncomfortable story," said the Brooch, in rather a husky voice. "For my part, I like stories that end up all right."

The Pin did not speak, for it was crying quietly and was dreadfully ashamed of its tears being seen. Even the Bracelets had stopped chattering and come down to listen. The Shawl-pin smiled. He felt his story had been a success, so he did not mind what the Brooch said.

"Now it is your turn," said the Brooch to the Pin, who, after thinking a little, said he would tell them a story once told him by an Opal Ring he knew when he asked how it came by its wonderful colours.

1 From Mary de Morgan, “On a Pincushion,” in *“On a Pincushion,” and Other Fairy Tales*, 2nd ed. (London: Seeley, Jackson, & Halliday, London, 1877), 1–3. This brief introduction is the narrative frame for the first three stories in the collection: “The Story of Vain Lamorna,” “The Seeds of Love,” and “The Story of the Opal.” In this edition, it is not even listed on the table of contents.

2 The Brooch’s tale, “The Story of Vain Lamorna,” is not included. Instead, we move ahead to the Shawl-pin’s tale, “The Seeds of Love.”

3 From Mary de Morgan, “The Seeds of Love,” in *“On a Pincushion,” and Other Fairy Tales*, 2nd ed. (London: Seeley, Jackson, & Halliday, 1877), 27–56.

4 A sloe is another name for a blackthorn, which, as its name suggests, is a thorny bush that produces bitter black fruit.

5 For Victorian ladies, having one’s hair down is symbolic of intimacy, as only one’s husband would see a woman with her hair down. It was considered improper for a woman to leave her home with her hair down; that Blanchelys does so suggests her state of mind and, perhaps, the improper or inappropriate nature of her actions and wish.

George Egerton

George Egerton, the pseudonym of Mary Chavelita Dunne Bright (1859–1945), was born in Australia and traveled extensively in her lifetime, living in Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Ireland, Wales, Germany, New York, and Norway. She is best known for her short story collections *Keynotes* (1893) and *Discords* (1894). Egerton wrote stories about women that focused on their psychology and, in Egerton's view, their inherently untamed nature. Elaine Showalter offers the following quotation of Egerton stating the intentions behind her writing: "I realised that in literature, everything had been better done by man than woman could hope to emulate. There was only one small plot left for her to tell: the *terra incognita* of herself, as she knew herself to be, not as man liked to imagine her—in a word, to give herself away, as man had given himself in his writings" (qtd. in Showalter xii–xiii). Egerton rejected ideals of feminine purity and chastity, instead writing women as she knew them to be. Egerton did not live a traditionally feminine life; Carolyn Christensen Nelson explains that her romantic life was scandalous, as she first lived in bigamy with an abusive alcoholic until his death, then wed and supported another husband until their divorce, before she finally met and wed another man fifteen years younger than she the same year as her divorce (7). As Nelson notes, Egerton's stories, "often drawn from Egerton's own experiences, explored psychological states of women, their dreams and fantasies, including their erotic desires" (7).

Egerton explicitly wrote and participated in a feminist movement, and, in fact, she is best known by scholars as a New Woman author. The New Woman movement emerged at the end of the nineteenth century with the general goal of expanding women's roles in society and emancipating women from sociocultural and legal restrictions. This goal was to be achieved in various ways, including expanding female education and employment opportunities, achieving women's suffrage, and changing sociocultural expectations regarding appropriate or ideal femininity. In addition, as Nelson points out, Egerton's stories also communicate the New Woman belief that "because women's ignorance about matters of sexuality

could have devastating consequences, women should be educated about sexual issues before marriage so they could make intelligent choices about the men they married" (xi). Martha Vicinus explains in her introduction to *Keynotes and Discords* that George Egerton's particular focus in her writing was on advocating for a greater awareness of female sexuality both inside and outside of marriage: "The 'New Women' revolted against what they saw as a totally unnatural upbringing, teaching them nothing about themselves or the opposite sex. . . . Egerton in particular felt compelled to describe with a new vehemence and confidence the importance of honouring women's sexuality" (viii). In "Virgin Soil," this theme appears in the marital misery of the heroine, a young girl later identified as Flo or Florence, a misery caused by her ignorance of both her own sexuality as well as the sexual expectations a Victorian husband had for his wife.

Although George Egerton's "Virgin Soil" is not immediately recognizable as a fairy tale, it actually rewrites the classic "Little Red Riding Hood," as the young girl is sent into danger (marriage) by her mother and is successfully entrapped and consumed (in marriage) by her wolf-like husband.[1] In addition, Egerton's writing style in "Virgin Soil," particularly in the first part, imitates that of traditional fairy tales by featuring unnamed characters who are identified by their stereotypical roles; it is only in the second part of the story that we learn the characters' names and more of their background and individual thoughts. In this way, Egerton calls attention to how she is adapting and revising the classic fairy tale in her short story for adults, as it is in the second part of the short story that the traditional ending of "Little Red Riding Hood" is changed to promote Egerton's feminist views.

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1 See, for instance, Sarah E. Maier's "A Decadent Discord: George Egerton" for a discussion of Flo's husband as the wolf.

“Virgin Soil” (1894)[1]

The bridegroom is waiting in the hall; with a trifle of impatience he is tracing the pattern of the linoleum with the point of his umbrella. He curbs it and laughs, showing his strong white teeth at a remark of his best man, then compares the time by his hunter with the clock on the stairs. He is florid, bright-eyed, loose-lipped, inclined to stoutness, but kept in good condition; his hair is crisp, curly, slightly grey; his ears peculiar, pointed at their tops like a faun’s. He looks very big and well-dressed, and, when he smiles, affable enough.

Upstairs a young girl, with the suns of seventeen summers on her brown head, is lying with her face hidden on her mother’s shoulder; she is sobbing with great childish sobs, regardless of reddened eyes and the tears that have splashed on the silk of her grey going-away gown.

The mother seems scarcely less disturbed than the girl. She is a fragile-looking woman with delicate fair skin, smoothly parted thin chestnut hair, dove-like eyes, and a monotonous piping voice. She is flushing painfully, making a strenuous effort to say something to the girl, something that is opposed to the whole instincts of her life.

She tries to speak, parts her lips only to close them again, and clasp her arms tighter round the girl’s shoulders; at length she manages to say with trembling, uncertain pauses:

“You are married now, darling, and you must obey”—she lays stress upon the word—“your husband in all things—there are—there are things you should know—but—marriage is a serious thing, a sacred thing”—with desperation—“you must believe that what your husband tells you is right—let him guide you—tell you—”

There is such acute distress in her usually unemotional voice that the girl looks up and scans her face—her blushing, quivering, faded face. Her eyes are startled, fawn-like eyes as her mother’s, her skin too is delicately fair, but her mouth is firmer, her jaw squarer, and her piquant, irregular nose is full of character. She is slightly built, scarcely fully developed in her fresh youth.

“What is it that I do not know, mother? What is it?”—with anxious impatience. “There is something more—I have felt it all these last weeks in your and the others’ looks—in his, in the very atmosphere—but why have you not told me before—I—” Her only answer is a gush of helpless tears from the mother, and a sharp rap at the door, and the bridegroom’s voice, with an imperative note that it strikes the nervous girl is new to it, that makes her cling to her mother in a close, close embrace, drop her veil and go out to him.

She shakes hands with the best man, kisses the girlfriend who has acted as bridesmaid—the wedding has been a very quiet one—and steps into the carriage. The Irish cook throws an old shoe after them from the side door, but it hits the trunk of an elder tree, and falls back onto the path, making that worthy woman cross herself and mutter of ill omens and bad luck to follow; for did not a magpie cross the path first thing this morning when she went to open the gate, and wasn’t a red-haired woman the first creature she clapped eyes on as she looked down the road?

Half an hour later the carriage pulls up at the little station and the girl jumps out first; she is flushed, and her eyes stare helplessly as the eyes of a startled child, and she trembles with quick running shudders from head to foot. She clasps and unclasps her slender, grey-gloved hands so tightly that the stitching on the back of one bursts.

He has called to the stationmaster, and they go into the refreshment room together; the latter appears at the door and, beckoning to a porter, gives him an order.

She takes a long look at the familiar little place. They have lived there three years, and yet she seems to see it now for the first time; the rain drips, drips monotonously off the zinc roof, the smell of the dust is fresh, and the white pinks in the borders are beaten into the gravel.

Then the train runs in; a first-class carriage, marked “engaged,” is attached, and he comes for her; his hot breath smells of champagne, and it strikes her that his eyes are fearfully big and bright,[2] and he offers her his arm with such a curious amused proprietary air that the girl shivers as she lays her hand in it.

The bell rings, the guard locks the door, the train steams out, and as it passes the signal box, a large well-kept hand, with a signet ring on the little finger, pulls down the blind on the window of an engaged carriage.[3]

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Five years later, one afternoon on an autumn day, when the rain is falling like splashing tears on the rails, and the smell of the dust after rain fills the mild air with freshness, and the white chrysanthemums struggle to raise their heads from the gravel path into which the sharp shower has beaten them, the same woman, for there is no trace of girlhood in her twenty-two years, slips out of a first-class carriage; she has a dressing-bag in her hand.

She walks with her head down and a droop in her shoulders; her quickness of step is due rather to nervous haste than elasticity of frame. When she reaches the turn of the road, she pauses and looks at the little villa with the white curtains and gay tiled window boxes. She can see the window of her old room, distinguish every shade in the changing leaves of the creeper climbing up the south wall, hear the canary's shrill note from where she stands.

Never once has she set foot in the peaceful little house with its air of genteel propriety since that eventful morning when she left it with him; she has always framed an excuse.

Now, as she sees it, a feeling of remorse fills her heart, and she thinks of the mother living out her quiet years, each day a replica of the one gone before, and her resolve weakens; she feels inclined to go back, but the waning sun flickers over the panes in the window of the room she occupied as a girl. She can recall how she used to run to the open window on the summer mornings and lean out and draw in the dewy freshness and welcome the day, how she has stood on moonlight nights and danced with her bare white feet in the strip of moonlight, and let her fancies fly out into the silver night, a young girl's dreams of the beautiful, wonderful world that lay outside.

A hard dry sob rises in her throat at the memory of it, and the fleeting expression of softness on her face changes to a bitter disillusion.

She hurries on, with her eyes down, up the neat graveled path, through the open door into the familiar sitting room.

The piano is open with a hymnbook on the stand; the grate is filled with fresh green ferns, a bowl of late roses perfume the room from the centre of the table. The mother is sitting in her easy chair, her hands folded across a

big white Persian cat on her lap; she is fast asleep. Some futile lace work, her thimble, and bright scissor are placed on a table near her.

Her face is placid, not a day older than that day five years ago. Her glossy hair is no greyer, her skin is clear, she smiles in her sleep. The smile rouses a sort of sudden fury in the breast of the woman standing in her dusty travelling cloak at the door, noting every detail in the room. She throws back her veil and goes over and looks at herself in the mirror over the polished chiffonnier[4]—scans herself pitilessly. Her skin is sallow with the dull sallowness of a fair skin in ill health, and the fringe of her brown hair is so lacking in lustre that it affords no contrast. The look of fawn-like shyness has vanished from her eyes, they burn sombrefully and resentfully in their sunken orbits, there is a dragged look about the mouth, and the keynote of her face is a cynical disillusion. She looks from herself to the reflection of the mother, and then, turning sharply with a suppressed exclamation, goes over, and shaking the sleeping woman not too gently, says:

“Mother, wake up, I want to speak to you!”

The mother starts with frightened eyes, stares at the other woman as if doubting the evidence of her sight, smiles, then, cowed by the unresponsive look in the other face, grows grave again, sits still and stares helplessly at her, finally bursting into tears with a:

“Flo, my dear, Flo, is it really you?”

The girl jerks her head impatiently and says drily:

“Yes, that is self-evident. I am going on a long journey. I have something to say to you before I start! Why on earth are you crying?”

There is a note of surprised wonder in her voice mixed with impatience.

The older woman has had time to scan her face, and the dormant motherhood in her is roused by its weary anguish. She is ill, she thinks, in trouble. She rises to her feet; it is characteristic of the habits of her life, with its studied regard for the observance of small proprieties, and distrust of servants as a class, that she goes over and closes the room door carefully.

This hollow-eyed, sullen woman is so unlike the fresh girl who left her five years ago that she feels afraid. With the quiet selfishness that has characterised her life she has accepted the excuses her daughter has made to avoid coming home, as she has accepted the presents her son-in-law has

sent her from time to time. She has found her a husband well-off in the world's goods, and there her responsibility ended.[5] She approaches her hesitatingly; she feels she ought to kiss her, there is something unusual in such a meeting after so long an absence—it shocks her, it is so unlike the one she has pictured; she has often looked forward to it, often, to seeing Flo's new frocks, to hearing of her town life.

"Won't you take off your things? You will like to go to your room?"

She can hear how her own voice shakes; it is really inconsiderate of Flo to treat her in this strange way.

"We will have some tea," she adds.

Her colour is coming and going; the lace at her wrist is fluttering. The daughter observes it with a kind of dull satisfaction; she is taking out her hatpins carefully. She notices a portrait in a velvet case upon the mantelpiece; she walks over and looks at it intently. It is her father, the father who was killed in India in a hill skirmish when she was a little lint-locked maid barely up to his knee.[6] She studies it with new eyes, trying to read what man he was, what soul he had, what part of him is in her, tries to find herself by reading him. Something in his face touches her, strikes some underlying chord in her, and she grinds her teeth at a thought it rouses.

"She must be ill, she must be very ill," says the mother, watching her, "to think I daren't offer to kiss my own child!" She checks the tears that keep welling up, feeling that they may offend this woman who is so strangely unlike the girl who left her. The latter has turned from her scrutiny of the likeness and sweeps her with a cold criticising look as she turns towards the door, saying:

"I *should* like some tea. I will go upstairs and wash off the dust."

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Half an hour later the two women sit opposite one another in the pretty room. The younger one is leaning back in her chair watching the mother pour out the tea, following the graceful movements of the white blue-veined hands amongst the tea things—she lets her wait on her; they have not spoken beyond a commonplace remark about the heat, the dust, the journey.

"How is Philip, is he well?" The mother ventures to ask with a feeling of trepidation, but it seems to her that she ought to ask about him.

“He is quite well, men of his type usually are; I may say he is particularly well just now, he has gone to Paris with a girl from the Alhambra!”[7]

The older woman flushes painfully, and pauses with her cup halfway to her lips and lets the tea run over unheeded onto her dainty silk apron.

“You are spilling your tea,” the girl adds with malicious enjoyment.

The woman gasps: “Flo, but Flo, my dear, it is dreadful! What would your poor father have said! *No wonder* you look ill, dear, how shocking! Shall I—ask the vicar to—to remonstrate with him?—”

“My dear mother, what an extraordinary idea! These little trips have been my one solace. I assure you, I have always hailed them as lovely oases in the desert of matrimony, resting places on the journey. My sole regret was their infrequency. That is very good tea, I suppose it is the cream.”

The older woman puts her cup on the tray and stares at her with frightened eyes and paled cheeks.

“I am afraid I don’t understand you, Florence. I am old-fashioned”—with a little air of frigid propriety—“I have always looked upon matrimony as a sacred thing. It is dreadful to hear you speak this way; you should have tried to save Philip—from—from such a shocking sin.”[8]

The girl laughs, and the woman shivers as she hears her. She cries—

“I would never have thought it of Philip. My poor dear, I am afraid you must be very unhappy.”

“Very”—with a grim smile—“but it is over now, I have done with it. I am not going back.”

If a bomb had exploded in the quiet, pretty room, the effect could hardly have been more startling than her almost cheerful statement. A big bee buzzes in and bangs against the lace of the older woman’s cap and she never heeds it, then she almost screams:

“Florence, Florence, my dear, you can’t mean to desert your husband! Oh, think of the disgrace, the scandal, what people will say, the”—with an uncertain quaver—“the sin. You took a solemn vow, you know, and you are going to break it—”

“My dear mother, the ceremony had no meaning for me, I simply did not know what I was signing my name to, or what I was vowing to do. I might as well have signed my name to a document drawn up in Choctaw. I have

no remorse, no prick of conscience at the step I am taking; my life must be my own. They say sorrow chastens, I don't believe it; it hardens, embitters; joy is like the sun, it coaxes all that is loveliest and sweetest in human nature. No, I am not going back."

The older woman cries, wringing her hands helplessly:

"I can't understand it. You must be very miserable to dream of taking such a serious step."

"As I told you, I am. It is a defect of my temperament. How many women really take the man nearest to them as seriously as I did! I think few. They finesse and flatter and wheedle and coax, but truth there is none. I couldn't do that, you see, and so I went to the wall. I don't blame them; it must be so, as long as marriage is based on such unequal terms, as long as man demands from a wife as a right, what he must sue from a mistress as a favour, until marriage becomes for many women a legal prostitution, a nightly degradation, a hateful yoke under which they age, mere bearers of children conceived in a sense of duty, not love. They bear them, birth them, nurse them, and begin again without choice in the matter, growing old, unlovely, with all joy of living swallowed in a senseless burden of reckless maternity, until their love, granted they started with that, the mystery, the crowning glory of their lives, is turned into a duty they submit to with distaste instead of a favour granted to a husband who must become a new lover to obtain it."

"But men are different, Florence; you can't refuse a husband, you might cause him to commit sin."

"Bosh, mother, he is responsible for his own sins, we are not bound to dry-nurse his morality. Man is what we have made him, his very faults are of our making. No wife is bound to set aside the demands of her individual soul for the sake of imbecile obedience. I am going to have some more tea."

The mother can only whimper:

"It is dreadful! I thought he made you such an excellent husband, his position too is so good, and he is so highly connected."

"Yes, and it is as well to put the blame in the right quarter. Philip is as God made him, he is an animal with strong passions, and he avails himself of the latitude permitted him by the laws of society. Whatever of blame, whatever of sin, whatever of misery is in the whole matter rests solely and

entirely with you, mother”—the woman sits bolt upright—“and with no one else—that is why I came here—to tell you that—I have promised myself over and over again that I would tell you. It is with you, and you alone the fault lies.”

There is so much of cold dislike in her voice that the other woman recoils and whimpers piteously:

“You must be ill, Florence, to say such wicked things. What have I done? I am sure I devoted myself to you from the time you were little; I refused”—dabbing her eyes with her cambric handkerchief—“ever so many good offers. There was young Fortescue in the artillery, such a good-looking man, and such an elegant horseman, he was quite infatuated about me; and Jones, to be sure he was in business, but he was most attentive. Everyone said I was a devoted mother; I can’t think what you mean, I—”

A smile of cynical amusement checks her.

“Perhaps not. Sit down, and I’ll tell you.”

She shakes off the trembling hand, for the mother has risen and is standing next to her, and pushes her into a chair, and paces up and down the room. She is painfully thin, and drags her limbs as she walks.

“I say it is your fault, because you reared me a fool, an idiot, ignorant of everything I ought to have known, everything that concerned me and the life I was bound to lead as a wife, my physical needs, my coming passion, the very meaning of my sex, my wifehood and motherhood to follow. You gave me not one weapon in my hand to defend myself against the possible attacks of man at his worst. You sent me out to fight the biggest battle of a woman’s life, the one in which she ought to know every turn of the game, with a white gauze”—she laughs derisively—“of maiden purity as a shield.”

Her eyes blaze, and the woman in the chair watches her as one sees a frog watch a snake when it is put into its case.

“I was fourteen when I gave up the gooseberry-bush theory as the origin of humanity; and I cried myself ill with shame when I learnt what maternity meant, instead of waking with a sense of delicious wonder at the great mystery of it. You gave me to a man, nay more, you told me to obey him, to believe that whatever he said would be right, would be my duty, knowing that the meaning of marriage was a sealed book to me, that I had no real

idea of what union with a man meant. You delivered me body and soul into his hands without preparing me in any way for the ordeal I was to go through. You sold me for a home, for clothes, for food; you played upon my ignorance, I won't say innocence, that is different. You told me, you and your sister, and your friend the vicar's wife, that it would be an anxiety off your mind if I were comfortably settled—"

"It is wicked of you to say such dreadful things!" the mother cries, "and besides"—with a touch of asperity—"you married him willingly, you seemed to like his attentions—"

"How like a woman! What a thorough woman you are, mother! The good old-fashioned kitten with a claw in her paw! Yes, I married him willingly; I was not eighteen, I had known no men, was pleased that you were pleased—and, as you say, I liked his attentions. He had tact enough not to frighten me, and I had not the faintest conception of what marriage with him meant. I had an idea"—with a laugh—"that the words of the minister settled the matter. Do you think that if I had realised how fearfully close the intimacy with him would have been that my whole soul would not have stood up in revolt, the whole woman in me cried out against such a degradation of myself?" Her words tremble with passion, and the woman who bore her feels as if she is being lashed by a whip. "Would I not have shuddered at the thought of *him* in such a relationship?—and waited, waited until I found the man who would satisfy me, body and soul—to whom I would have gone without any false shame, of whom I would think with gladness as the father of a little child to come, for whom the white fire of love or passion, call it what you will, in my heart would have burned clearly and saved me from the feeling of loathing horror that has made my married life a nightmare to me—ay, made me a murderess in heart over and over again. This is not exaggeration. It has killed the sweetness in me, the pure thoughts of womanhood—has made me hate myself and *hate you*. Cry, mother, if you will; you don't know how much you have to cry for—I have cried myself barren of tears. Cry over the girl you killed"—with a gust of passion—"why didn't you strangle me as a baby? It would have been kinder; my life has been a hell, mother—I felt it vaguely as I stood on the platform waiting, I remember the mad impulse I had to jump down under the engine as it came in, to escape from the dread that was chilling my soul. What have these years been? One long crucifixion, one long submittal to the desires of a man I bound myself to in ignorance of what it meant; every caress"—with a cry

—“has only been the first note of that. Look at me”—stretching out her arms—“look at this wreck of my physical self; I wouldn’t dare to show you the heart or the soul underneath. He has stood on his rights; but do you think, if I had known, that I would have given such insane obedience, from a mistaken sense of duty, as would lead to this? I have my rights too, and my duty to myself, if I had only recognised them in time.”

“Sob away, mother; I don’t even feel for you—I have been burnt too badly to feel sorry for what will only be a tiny scar to you; I have all the long future to face with all the world against me. Nothing will induce me to go back. Better anything than that; food and clothes are poor equivalents for what I have had to suffer—I can get them at a cheaper rate. When he comes to look for me, give him that letter. He will tell you he has only been an uxorious[9] husband and that you reared me a fool. You can tell him too, if you like, that I loathe him, shiver at the touch of his lips, his breath, his hands; that my whole body revolts at his touch; that when he has turned and gone to sleep, I have watched him with such a growing hatred that at times the temptation to kill him has been so strong that I have crept out of bed and walked the cold passage in my bare feet until I was too benumbed to feel anything; that I have counted the hours to his going away, and cried out with delight at the sight of the retreating carriage!”

“You are very hard, Flo; the Lord soften your heart! Perhaps”—with trepidation—“if you had had a child—”

“Of his—that indeed would have been the last straw—no, mother.”

There is such a peculiar expression of satisfaction over something—of some inner understanding, as a man has when he dwells on the successful accomplishment of a secret purpose—that the mother sobs quietly, wringing her hands.[10]

“I did not know, Flo, I acted for the best; you are very hard on me!”

***

Later, when the bats are flitting across the moon, and the girl is asleep—she has thrown herself half-dressed on the narrow white bed of her girlhood, with her arms folded across her breast and her hands clenched—the mother steals into the room. She has been turning over the contents of an old desk: her marriage certificate, faded letters on foreign paper, and a bit of Flo’s

hair cut off each birthday, and a sprig of orange blossom she wore in her hair. She looks faded and grey in the silver light, and she stands and gazes at the haggard face in its weary sleep. The placid current of her life is disturbed, her heart is roused, something of her child's soul-agony has touched the sleeping depths of her nature. She feels as if scales have dropped from her eyes, as if the instincts and conventions of her life are toppling over, as if all the needs of protesting women[11] of whom she has read with a vague displeasure have come home to her. She covers the girl tenderly, kisses her hair, and slips a little roll of notes[12] into the dressing bag on the table and steals out, with the tears running down her cheeks.

When the girl looks into her room as she steals by, when the morning light is slanting in, she sees her kneeling, her head, with its straggling grey hair, bowed in tired sleep. It touches her. Life is too short, she thinks, to make any one's hours bitter; she goes down and writes a few kind words in pencil and leaves them near her hand, and goes quickly out into the road.

The morning is grey and misty, with faint yellow stains in the east, and the west wind blows with a melancholy sough in it—the first whisper of the fall, the fall that turns the world of nature into a patient suffering from phthisis[13]—delicate season of decadence, when the loveliest scenes have a note of decay in their beauty; when a poisoned arrow pierces the marrow of insect and plant, and the leaves have a hectic flush and fall, fall and shrivel and curl in the night's cool; and the chrysanthemums, the "good-bye summers" of the Irish peasants, have a sickly tinge in their white. It affects her, and she finds herself saying: "Wither and die, wither and die, make compost for the loves of the spring, as the old drop out and make place for the new, who forget them, to be in their turn forgotten." She hurries on, feeling that her autumn has come to her in her spring, and a little later she stands once more on the platform where she stood in the flush of her girlhood, and takes the train in the opposite direction.

1 From George Egerton, "Virgin Soil," in *Discords* (London: John Lane, 1894), 145–62.

2 The description of the husband's big, bright eyes is reminiscent of the classic Little Red Riding Hood's description of the wolf when he is disguised as her grandmother.

3 A signet ring is a ring used as a seal to take the place of a signature on official documents. In this case, it is a sign of wealth and power, especially when combined with the husband's drinking of champagne and ability to reserve a private train car. The private car, locked and with closed blinds, emphasizes his power over his young bride.

4 A chiffonnier is a kind of cupboard, bureau, or sideboard; it can have a raised bookshelf on top.

5 It was common for middle- and upper-class mothers during this time to focus on finding their marriageable daughters an appropriate, and ideally wealthy, husband. The daughter's marriage would transfer the responsibility of caring for the woman (financially and otherwise) from the parents to the husband. We can see this maternal focus in many texts, including, for instance, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

6 The British have a long history with India, starting with the British East India Company. This company began ruling over parts of India in 1757, but following the Indian Rebellion of 1857, rule of India was transferred to the crown, in particular Queen Victoria, in 1858. British colonization of India would last until 1947.

7 The Alhambra is a palace and fortress located in Granada, Andalusia, Spain.

8 One of the beliefs that Egerton fought against was the idea that women are inherently purer and more virtuous than men and, therefore, should use their influence to help their husbands be more virtuous themselves.

9 Having or showing great or excessive devotion and fondness for one's wife.

10 Some scholars, such as Iveta Jusová, read Flo's expression here as a suggestion that she has aborted a pregnancy previously to avoid bearing her husband's child.

11 The protesting women here refer to the various women's rights activists of the time period.

12 Money.

13 An archaic medical term referring to pulmonary tuberculosis or a similar wasting disease.

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